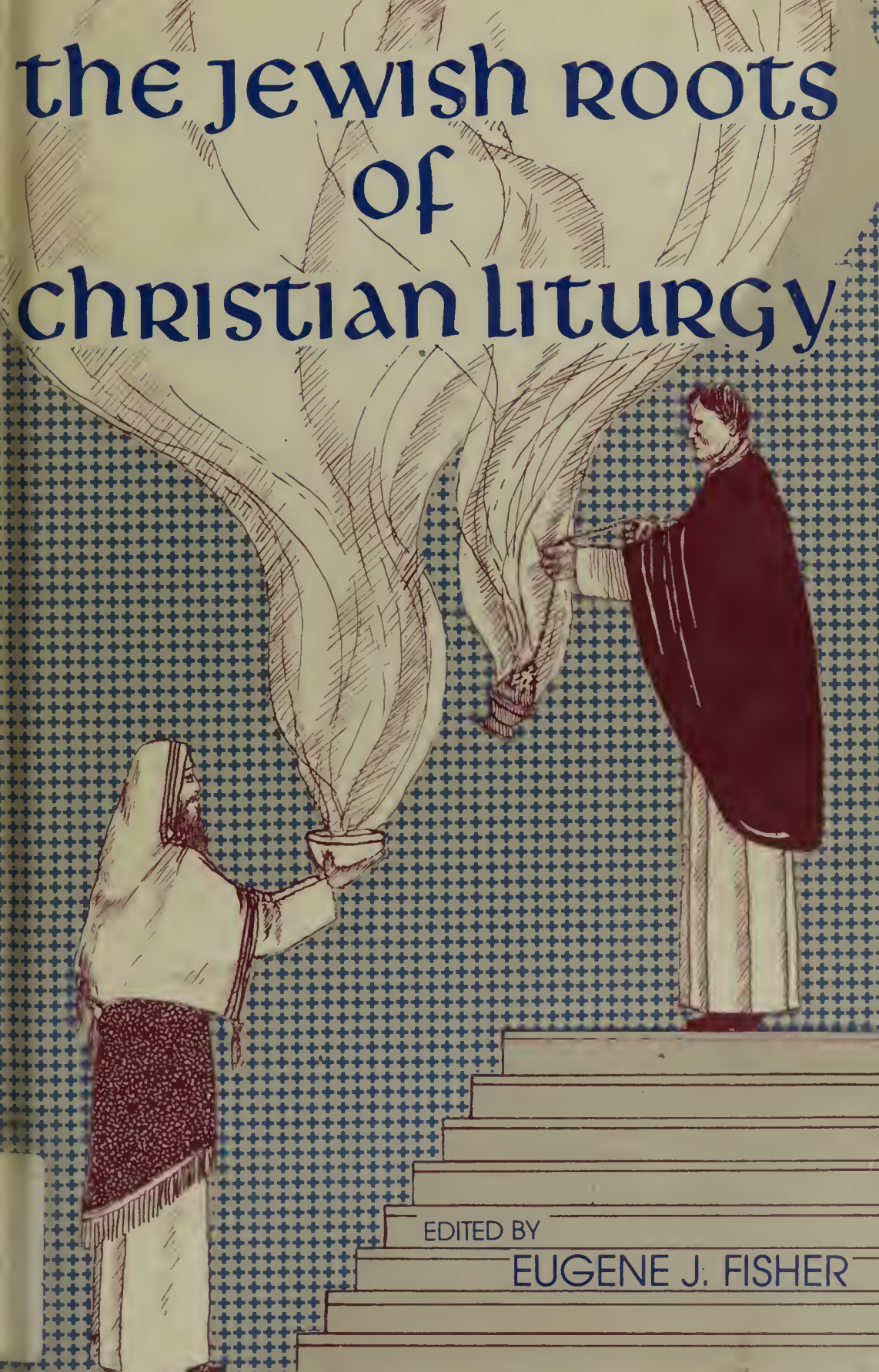
The Jewish Roots of Christian Liturgy



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Introduction: Jewish Liturgy and Christian Liturgy: Roots and Tensions

Eugene J. Fisher

John Paul II, in an address to representatives of Catholic Bishops' Conferences gathered from around the world in March of 1982 to assess the progress made in Christian-Jewish dialogue, stated:

> Our common spiritual heritage (with Jews) is considerable. Help in better understanding certain aspects of the church's life can be gained by taking an inventory of that heritage, and also by taking into account the faith and religious life of the Jewish people as professed and lived now as well. This is the case with the liturgy. Its roots have still to be more deeply traced and above all need to be better known and appreciated by the faithful.

The essays collected here, introduced by Sharon Burns' and Sofia Cavaletti's masterful surveys of the roots of Christian liturgy in Judaism, offer theological foundations and practical case studies of central liturgical moments from the breaking of bread to marriage and death liturgies, and the relationship between Sabbath and Sunday. In these, both the sense of appreciation for the rootage of Christian liturgy spoken of by the Pope, and a mature awareness of the historical tensions between our communities as reflected in our liturgical practice, are well represented.

The essays collected in this volume can help bring the interested reader well along the journey to understanding the living sources of

Christian liturgy. All are taken from the pages of *SIDIC*, the journal of the Service International de Documentation Judeo-Chretienne, published in Rome in both English and French editions. *SIDIC*, perhaps the premier international journal devoted to documenting the course of Christian-Jewish relations, is itself a remarkable testimony to the miracle of "self-conversion" that can happen in true dialogue.

The religious congregation of Our Lady of Sion was founded in the mid-nineteenth century with the declared goal of converting Jews into Christians. Over the course of time and under the impact of various events, such as the Holocaust, the Congregation "moved away from the original goal to a fresh understanding of the permanent election of the Jewish people and the validity of the Jewish religion."[1] At present, the Congregation is one of the leading forces in the Church fostering renewed understanding of and dialogue with Jews and Judaism.

It was out of this spirit in the wake of the Second Vatican Council that SIDIC was founded in Rome in 1967 to help provide resources for implementing the mandates of *Nostra Aetate*. Its issues have chronicled the progress of the dialogue ever since, not only making available official documents issued by the churches, Protestant as well as Roman Catholic, but also providing a major forum for theological development in the field.

Out of this wealth of riches, this volume has sought to gather a representative sampling dealing with the roots of Christian liturgy in Jewish ritual and worship.[2] Quite often, we Christians tend to posit Christian liturgy over against Jewish liturgy, as if the two were polar opposites. In this work, however, the Christian reader will see, without diminishing the distinctive aspects that characterize the uniqueness of either, something of how the two liturgical traditions interact spiritually and historically.

Just as the New Testament cannot adequately be comprehended on its own without a thorough steeping in the Hebrew Scriptures, which was the only Bible the Apostles knew, so Christian liturgy cannot be fully appreciated without an awareness of its intimate relationship with the Jewish liturgical life lived so faithfully by Jesus and his followers.

This book will introduce interested laity and clergy alike to

some of the depth and riches of renewed liturgical understanding that are in store for those willing to see Catholic liturgy not as isolated from its spiritual heritage in Judaism but as in ever-creative dialogue with it. Catechists, homilists and parish liturgical commissions will find it especially useful as a discussion tool and resource, a motivative challenge to transcend that which divides Jews and Christians and to move toward that which we are called ever more urgently by the constant challenge to prepare the world for the coming fulfillment of God's Reign among us.

Notes

1. Charlotte Klein, "From Conversion to Dialogue—The Sisters of Sion and the Jews," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (Vol. 18:3, Summer, 1981) 388–400.
2. The articles were produced over a period of two decades. No attempt has been made to update their style (e.g. the use of "Old Testament" rather than "Hebrew Scriptures" or the use of gender-specific language). The bibliography at the end of this volume serves to update the general resources now available.

PART I

Jewish Origins and Christian Liturgy

The Jewish Roots of Christian Liturgy

Sofia Cavaletti

We can see a very close ideological connection between the Synagogue and the Church: the essential element in the world of the Synagogue is the proclamation of the Word of God, and the first part of the Mass is called the Liturgy of the Word. Nevertheless, it is essential to remember that whereas in the Synagogue salvation is hoped for, in the Church it is announced as already accomplished.

JESUS AND THE SYNAGOGUE

The synagogue originated in the Exile. The Jews, deprived of the Temple, sought for a means of replacing the animal sacrifices offered there. The Lord had associated his presence in a very special way with the Temple, and after its destruction he himself was, in a sense, an exile. Yet he continued to speak to his people through his Law. Thus, their only remaining means of communicating with him and of answering his presence among them was to meditate and to ponder upon his Word. But the origins of the synagogue were not merely contingent and historical; when the Jews returned to the land of their fathers and reconstructed the Temple, the use of the synagogue increased rather than diminished, thus proving its vitality. It was rooted in a religious need which became deeper and more widespread as time went on, a desire that religion should penetrate more deeply into daily life and that the non-priestly classes should have a more lively participation in its activities.

During the earthly life of Jesus, the synagogue was, for the Jew, perhaps the truest expression of his own spirituality. Jesus himself

and his apostles frequently chose to teach in the synagogue. "Jesus went about teaching in their synagogues", says Matthew (6 : 23). He was often in the synagogues of Capernaum and Narareth (Mt. 12: 9; 13 : 54; Mk. 1 : 21, etc.). He himself, as though summarizing his life's work, says before the Sanhedrin: "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in your synagogues and in the Temple" (Jn. 18:20).

THE SYNAGOGUE WORSHIP

Jesus spoke his own word during the synagogue worship. He had a reason for this and, in our opinion, his reason must be sought in the spirit of the worship itself which was totally centered on the Word of God. This Word was solemnly proclaimed to the people and they responded by prayer.

The nucleus of synagogue worship was the Pentateuch which the Jews considered to be in a special way "the Law" (Torah), hence, the teaching of God. By the time of Jesus the first reading was complemented by and joined to a second from the prophetical books. The oldest available information on the arrangement of these readings comes from texts slightly posterior to the time of Jesus. However, as religious traditions were in general conservative, we can conclude that this information applies also to the synagogue practice of the time of Christ. The prophetic text often explains and interprets the passage of the Law. Sometimes it helps to place a feast in its historical context, at others it is a spiritual or homiletic comment on the chosen passage. Finally, the prophetic reading is messianic, in that it describes a vision of the future or a liberator who will come "on that day" to bestow God's Spirit of comfort, salvation and plenitude upon his people.

The prophetic reading did not pronounce the last word on the Torah reading; it rather placed the latter in its future perspective, the expectation of an event still to come, the coming of a long-awaited person. It can be said that in such instances as these, the liturgy of the synagogue seemed incomplete, straining towards a fulfilment yet to come. Thus, at the end of the readings, the worshippers praised God who had just spoken his word to them, and in a prayer that is essentially eschatological, they asked him to hasten this fulfilment.

> Magnified and sanctified be his great Name in the world which he hath created according to his will. May he establish his kingdom during your life and during your days, and during the life of all the house of Israel, even speedily and at a near time.[1]

This prayer, the *Kaddish,* whose similarities to the Our Father are obvious, has for centuries concluded the synagogue readings; it probably did so at the time of Jesus. Hearing the promises of God aroused the desire of their speedy realization, and the *Kaddish* was the most natural response.

SYNAGOGUE WORSHIP AND THE PREACHING OF JESUS

It would seem that Jesus found in this future-orientated worship, and in those who shared it, the material and moral setting for the proclamation of his own word. The worship of the synagogue had kindled hope in men's hearts and Jesus responded to this hope by showing that it would be fulfilled in his own person.

Many of the episodes in the life of Jesus can be fully understood only if they are seen in this light,[2] e.g. the multiplication of the loaves as narrated by John (6 : 1ff). This miracle explains the later discourses of Jesus in which he calls himself "the Bread of Life" (Jn. 6:22). Between the pericope of the miracle, which occurred at some undetermined place on the banks of Lake Tiberias, and Jesus' discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum, comes the account of the walking on the waters when the boat of the apostles almost floundered in the storm. This miracle must have been performed between Jesus' leaving the place where he multiplied the loaves and his journey to Capernaum. In this context the evangelist states precisely: "It was shortly before the Jewish festival of Passover", and he adds: "There was plenty of grass there", thus stressing the fact that the season was spring. These details are given by the evangelist so as to place his narrative in its proper setting: the liturgical solemnity of the Passover. We know that the central point of the paschal liturgy was the Exodus, and that the Canticle of the Red Sea was read in the synagogue, a canticle which celebrates God's manifestation of his power in bringing his people through the Red Sea. What must have

been the effect of this passage on the apostles who had just witnessed the extraordinary power of Jesus over the waters! They, and all those to whom the miracle was known, could not have failed to make the obvious connection. They would hear in the synagogue how "the Lord drove back the sea with a strong easterly wind all night, and he made dry land of the sea. The waters parted . . ." (Ex. 14 : 21), and they could scarcely have failed to remember that while a strong wind was blowing Jesus had walked dry-footed across the sea of Tiberias, almost as though a path had been opened for him. The prophets, referring to the Exodus, had said that "on that day" (i.e. the messianic times) a new way would be opened over the waters. Is there, perhaps, a connection between the words of the prophets and the miraculous event on the waters of the lake? The people of Israel had passed through the Red Sea; over Lake Tiberias, the long-awaited Messiah had passed, he who in himself epitomized the whole people of God.

During the Passover the account of the sending of the manna to satisfy the hunger of the Israelites in the desert is also read from Numbers 11. The discourse on the bread of life which takes up the greater part of Chapter 6 in John's Gospel is in answer to the question: "What miracle will you show us that we should believe in you? What work will you do? Our fathers ate manna in the desert, as Scripture says, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat' " (6: 31). The Gospel text makes no reference to the Passover liturgy; St. John evidently considered the previous reference to the feast to be sufficient. To us who read these texts so long after they were compiled it is less clear why the crowd recalled the manna, which Jesus took as the theme of his discourse and of the subsequent discussion; but as soon as we realize that the account of the manna had just been read in the synagogue, the connection is evident. Jesus uses the question to show how the Scripture was fulfilled in himself: the manna had saved the Hebrews from temporal death; he had come down from heaven to save men from eternal death. "Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and they are dead . . . I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever."

Jesus situated his teaching in the framework of the proclamation of God's Word in the synagogue, thus showing the fulfilment in his

own person of events narrated and foretold in the Old Testament. The synagogue worship did not supply Jesus with an opportunity merely to teach; it was for him the opportunity to give his own teaching.

The parable of the Good Shepherd is found only in John's Gospel (10 : 1ff), and it is completed by that of the Lost Sheep in Luke (15: 1ff). John ends his narrative by saying that it was winter, on the feast of the Dedication. This feast commemorated the purification of the Temple by Judah Maccabee after it had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes, and during its liturgy Genesis 46 : 28ff was read. This passage related Joseph's instructions to his brothers to make clear to Pharaoh that they and their fathers before them had always been shepherds. The account of David's seeking permission from Saul to fight Goliath is also read (1 Samuel 17). David says that he has already given proof of his strength and courage: "Your servant used to look after the sheep for his father, and whenever a lion or a bear came out and took a sheep from the flock, I used to follow him up and strike him down and rescue it from his mouth; if he turned on me I seized him by the hair at his jaw and struck him down and killed him. Your servant has killed both lion and bear." David is here seen as an intrepid shepherd, constantly attentive to his father's flock. The prophetic reading for the feast (Ezek. 34 : 1ff) shows the shepherd, David, in a different light; he is called the "one shepherd" to whom God will entrust his sheep when he binds himself in friendship to his people by the "covenant of peace". David's relationship with God is difficult to establish because, in the same passage, the prophet explains that God himself will gather his flock together "on that day". He will seek out the dispersed sheep to bring them back so that he can heal their wounds and cure their sickness.

The entire liturgy of the Dedication, centered on the theme of the "shepherd", gave Jesus the opportunity of presenting himself as the "Good Shepherd", in contrast to those shepherds who "fed themselves" (cf. Ezekiel). The "Good Shepherd" who, like David the intrepid shepherd, defends his sheep against the wolf (gives his life for them), is the "one shepherd" sent by the Lord to his flock. Jesus is the Shepherd who, like the Lord himself in Ezekiel, cares most lovingly for his sheep and goes in search of them when they are lost.

Seen in this light the parable of the Good Shepherd is an explicit

declaration by Jesus that he is the Messiah, and the identification of the Shepherd with the Lord himself (cf. Ezekiel) can lead to a very profound understanding of the nature of Jesus, the Messiah.

The great autumn festivals are also reflected in the teaching of Jesus. The liturgy was performed in the Temple with certain "popular" elements introduced by the Pharisees, chief among these being the libation on the altar. This took place towards the end of the festival: water was drawn from a spring outside the walls of Jerusalem, carried into the city through a gate which is still called the Water Gate, and poured out on the altar in supplication for rain. The entire rite is given a messianic interpretation through the prophetic reading which follows it.

> When that day comes,
> running waters will issue from Jerusalem,
> half of them to the eastern sea,
> half of them to the western sea;
> they will flow summer and winter.
> And the Lord will be king of the whole world.
> When that day comes, the Lord will be unique
> [and His Name unique.

These words of Zechariah (14 : 8ff) urge the people to dwell no longer on the present, but to see in the water poured out on the altar the eternal "living water" which "on that day" will make the earth fruitful. Ezekiel speaks again of the marvellous fertilizing power of this water (Ezek. 47 : 1ff). Wherever it flows all living things will be restored and vivified, and "on either bank will grow every kind of fruit tree with leaves that never wither and fruit that never fails; they will bear new fruit every month, because this water comes from the sanctuary". According to the interpretation of a rabbinical text,[3] this marvellous fertility will renew the earth in such a way that, no longer contaminated by man's sin, it will be restored to its pristine fruitfulness. Furthermore, continues the commentary, between the earth's origin and its messianic renovation there is in salvation history the essential event of the Exodus when Israel drank from miraculous springs in the desert; this must not be forgotten. Thus when the Jews participated in this Temple liturgy, they looked back to the origin of

the world, saw it already being renewed at a crucial moment of Israel's history, and at the same time looked forward to the time when all their hopes would be realized.

It is against this background that Jesus cries: "If any man is thirsty let him come to me" (Jn. 7 : 37). These words are said deliberately. Jesus has waited for the time when they would be most fully understood, when the minds of those who heard them would be most open to the long-awaited fulfilment of messianic hope. He himself was the inexhaustible source of living water, the water of eternal life.

JESUS IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF NAZARETH

We have seen Jesus constantly placing his teaching in the context of synagogue worship. He did this from the beginning of his ministry. Luke tells of his preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth and places it in the first year of his public life, shortly after the miracle at Cana. News of the miracle would soon have reached Nazareth, which is close to Cana. This perhaps accounts for the fact that on the following Sabbath Jesus was called upon to read in the synagogue of Nazareth, where he was known only as "the son of Joseph" and where he was to make so little impact. He was given the book of the prophet Isaiah, and opening it, he read the following passage:

> The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
> for the Lord has anointed me.
> He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
> to bind up hearts that are broken;
> to proclaim liberty to captives,
> and to the blind new sight,
> to set the downtrodden free,
> to proclaim the Lord's year of favor. (Is. 61: 1–2; Lk. 4: 18–19)

Then he "rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him" (Lk. 4 : 16). The hope of the people was not to be disappointed. On that day in the synagogue they listened to an explanation of Scripture such as

they had never before heard. This was the reason why Jesus said: "This text is being fulfilled today, even as you listen."

The very presence of Jesus in the synagogue meant that the Word of God, revealed by the prophets and patriarchs, had been fulfilled. All the expectation of the Old Testament had been realized in "the son of Joseph". The presence of Jesus was the answer to that invocation of the *Kaddish* which implores God to send the promised salvation. On that day Jesus openly proclaimed this fact, and by linking it with the synagogue worship he gave it a ritual solemnity: he himself is the awaited one, he is the light of the world that has been kindled, and in his splendor (according to Isaiah) many peoples and kings will flock to Jerusalem.

On that day in the synagogue of Nazareth the synagogal liturgy became the Christian Liturgy of the Word, the proclamation that salvation is already here. These words are the essence of the Christian message just as the essence of the Old Testament message is: Salvation is on the way. The novelty of Christ's message lies in the "today" with which he opened his interpretation of the prophetic passage. His "today" ends the period of waiting and begins a new era. It is the "today" of salvation in which we live, and Jesus solemnly proclaimed it in the context of the synagogue worship.

SYNAGOGUE WORSHIP AND THE PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES

After the return of Jesus to his Father, the apostles continued to teach in the synagogue and to proclaim there the news that was to resound throughout the world: "Christ is risen." They chose the synagogue because its liturgy inspired men to hope. Even Paul, although called to be "the apostle of the Gentiles", upon arriving at Antioch in Pisidia during his first voyage went to the synagogue on the Sabbath, and after the reading of the Law and the Prophets was invited by the heads of the community to speak. He availed himself of this opportunity to proclaim Christ, crucified and risen: ". . . this message of salvation is meant for you" (Acts 13 : 13ff). He spoke also in the synagogue at Philippi (Acts 16 : 13), on three successive Sabbaths in that of Thessalonika (Acts 17 : 2–3), and finally at Corinth (Acts 18 : 4ff) where the president of the synagogue came to believe in the Lord.

THE WORSHIP OF THE SYNAGOGUE AND THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Christian Liturgy of the Word evolved from the synagogue worship and it is still marked by its origin. If we compare the Sabbath services with the oldest available forms of the Christian Liturgy of the Word, we cannot fail to notice striking similarities of structure. In the words of Righetti, "a true and exact continuity of worship was intentionally allowed by the first Christians".[4]

Justin the Martyr in his *First Apology* has left us the most ancient description of the Mass in liturgical history. In the introductory part are to be found, although in a different order, almost all the elements of the synagogue service.

> . . . And on the day which is called Sunday, there is an assembly in the same place of all who live in cities, or in country districts; and the records of the Apostles, or the writings of the Prophets, are read as long as we have time. Then the reader concludes: and the President verbally instructs and exhorts us, to the imitation of these excellent things: then, we all together rise and offer up our prayers . . . (I, 67).[5]

A description of the Eucharist follows, and the service ends with a collection for the poor.

In this account there is no mention of the profession of faith (*Shema*) which is part of the synagogue service, nor of the blessing which closes it, but all the other elements are common to both synagogue and church. The "prayers" mentioned by Justin are our "prayers of the faithful". Like those of the synagogue, they conclude the Liturgy of the Word by presenting to God the needs of all men. They resemble the greatly venerated "Eighteen Blessings", the most ancient elements of which go back to a past that is more or less legendary. The Talmud refers to them as the work of the prophets and the 120 elders. They can be divided into three parts: the first is devoted to praise and the last to thanksgiving. The central portion, by far the most interesting, changed according to the feast because it contained those prayers of petition which suited the different occa-

sions. It had the same element of petition as that found in our "prayers of the faithful".

It is quite possible that when Justin speaks of "prayers" he includes psalms. Selections from these were recited in the synagogue before the Scripture readings. In both church and synagogue the readings were followed by a sermon, and at the end of both services a collection was made for the poor.

On the basis of the data given by Justin, the following scheme can be drawn up.

Synagogue Service

Profession of Faith
Prayer of the "Eighteen Blessings"
Psalms
Readings (Law and Prophets)
Sermon
Priestly Blessing
Collection for the Poor

Liturgy of the Word

. . . . . .
Prayers of Intercession
Psalms (?)
Readings (Law, Prophets, Gospel)
Sermon
. . . . . .
Collection for the Poor[6]

The resemblance between these two structures is still more striking when we compare the Jewish with the more recent Christian form in which the people respond to the proclamation of the Word of God by a profession of faith, thus introducing into the Christian cult an element of Jewish worship which was not present at the time when Justin wrote.

Hence, today, Christians should realize that when they listen to the proclamation of the Word of God in the liturgy, they are taking part in a form of worship which has its roots in Judaism, that is to

say, a form of worship which was used for the first time one day in the earthly life of Jesus Christ in the synagogue of Nazareth.

THE PASSOVER MEAL AND THE EUCHARIST

It is still more significant to see how the Eucharist, the most important act of Christian worship, originated in the context of Jewish worship. Without entering into the question of the paschal character of the Last Supper, we would like to draw attention to the similarity of structure which exists between it and the Jewish Passover meal, thus making it possible to reconstruct the banquet which Jesus celebrated with his apostles on the eve of his death.

THE JEWISH PASSOVER MEAL

The modern reader can be misled by the sobriety of the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper. Living at a time far removed from that of Jesus' earthly life, he wants nevertheless to reconstruct, as accurately as possible, the event and its context. The silence of the evangelists leads us to investigate those texts which treat of Jewish religious life at the beginning of the Christian era, and which throw indirect light on the figure of Jesus himself. There are no available texts of the Passover meal dating from the time of Jesus, but in the corpus of civil and religious rules called the Mishna, particularly the tract on Passover (*Pesahim*), the additions to this tract (*Tosefta*), and an interpretative text (*Sifrei*), there exists an outline of the Passover meal and certain of its elements. These documents are of the second century A.D. and can therefore be trusted to give an accurate description of the Passover ritual as observed by Jesus and his apostles. In them must be sought the living context of the Gospel account.

According to the Mishna, the Passover meal (which the Jews called *seder,* i.e. order) was celebrated, at the beginning of the Christian era, in much the same way as it is celebrated today, with the exception of a few unimportant additions. The following is a brief description. After the blessing of the day had been recited over the first cup of wine, all the requisite foods were brought to the master of the *seder.* Among these foods was, of course, the unleavened bread (*matzah*). According to a well-documented custom of a later date,

three portions of unleavened bread were presented to the master. He divided one of them in two, covering one part with a small napkin and placing the other with the uncut portions. Over them all he then recited the customary and already ancient formula[7] for the blessing of bread: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who bringest forth bread from the earth." The divided *matzah* seems to have had a special importance because a second blessing was pronounced over it immediately after the first: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who hast sanctified us with thy commandments and commanded us concerning the eating of unleavened bread." After this blessing the master of the *seder* ate a piece of the *matzah* and distributed it to those at table.[8] The portion which had been placed under the napkins was brought out at the end of the meal and consumed without a blessing. The final blessing over the rest of the food followed. It must be kept in mind that these details are found only in a relatively late text, but, given the scarcity of earlier liturgical documents, we cannot exclude the possibility of their referring to a much earlier practice.

At this point the youngest child present had to question his father as to the particular significance of the Passover night, why it differed from all other nights. Why is the bread unleavened, why are the herbs bitter, why is the meat roasted and not boiled? These questions prompted the father of the family to explain the meaning of the celebration, which he was obliged to do, according to the precepts of the Mishnah, "beginning with the humiliation and ending with the glory". In other words, he had to explain the passage from Deuteronomy (26 : 5ff):[9] "My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down into Egypt . . . there he became a nation, great, mighty and strong. The Egyptians ill-treated us, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with mighty hand and outstretched arm . . ." Or he had to explain the text of Joshua (24:2ff):[10] "In ancient days your ancestors lived beyond the River [Euphrates] . . . then I brought your father Abraham from beyond the river and led him through all the land of Canaan . . . Then I sent Moses and Aaron . . . So I brought you out of (Egypt) . . . I gave you a land where you never toiled, you live in towns you never built; you eat now from vineyards and olive groves you never planted."

These are the two most ancient outlines of salvation history;

they stress the Lord's call to the fathers of the Israelites to leave an idolatrous country in order to take possession of the promised land that he would give to them, his people, and the liberation from enslavement to the Egyptians when Israel truly became the free people of God. Already in Exodus 13 : 14 there is mention of sons asking their fathers the reasons for certain fixed cultic laws, but there the answers were determined by the duty to speak of the redemption of the first-born. They were therefore limited to the second point of salvation history, the liberation from slavary, since it was then that the first-born of the Israelites were miraculously delivered from the scourge that had killed the first-born of the Egyptians.

This brief summary of the history of Israel provides the master of the *seder* with a particularly suitable context in which to explain the reasons for eating roast lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs. In the Passover rite during which the eating of the foods is prescribed, every Jew can relive, and in a sense actualize, his historic past.

The paschal lamb (*pesah*) recalls how the Lord had "passed over" (*pasah*) the houses of the Israelites at the very moment when the first-born of the Egyptians were dying. The unleavened bread is a reminder that because they had to leave Egypt in haste there was not time for the bread to rise. The bitter herbs recall the bitterness of their sufferings in bondage. Yet this history is never totally past, since it is re-enacted in the person of every Jew who participates in the rite of Passover.[11]

According to the Mishnah, every Jew must "consider himself as having come forth from Egypt". The liberation worked by God at the time of Moses is the same as the liberation worked by him for each and every Jew. The Passover rite enables all Jews to become conscious of this liberation and to share in it.

Therefore, every Jew is bound to

> thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, extol, and adore Him who performed all these miracles for our fathers and for us. He has brought us forth from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to holiday, from darkness to great light, and from bondage to redemption. Let us then recite before him a new song: Hallelujah.[12]

These words mark the beginning of the recitation of the first part of the Psalms of Praise (*Hallel*), i.e. Psalms 113 and 114. These psalms must end with a mention of redemption, to which mention Rabbi Akiba gave a clearly messianic character in the following words:

> So, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, bring us to other festivals and holy days that come toward us in peace, happy in the building of thy city and joyous in thy service. And there may we eat of the sacrifices and the paschal offerings . . . Blessed art thou, O Lord, Redeemer of Israel.[13]

The history recalled by the master of the *seder* is being continued in the person of every Jew who participates in the Passover rite, while at the same time it looks forward to that future foretold by the prophet when Jerusalem will be rebuilt and an unending worship celebrated there.

At this point a second cup of wine is blessed and the meal begins. It is truly a ritual meal preceded and followed by readings and prayers. It is this rite that makes it possible for the Jew in every age to share in the liberation wrought by God for his people. The blessing "over the food" follows, in thanksgiving for the meal. A third cup of wine is then blessed, after which comes a blessing for the earth and another blessing that begins "To him who restores Jerusalem".[14] Every meal is an act of worship because it is a sharing in the good things of God, but for the Jew it is connected with the rebuilding of the Temple, since worship is connected with the Temple.

The thanksgiving is completed by the blessing of a fourth cup of wine. This is the most solemn of all the blessings and here Jews declare that David alone would be worthy to bless this cup, thus clearly attributing to it a messianic character. The blessing is followed by the other Psalms of Praise beginning with 115 ("Not by us, O Lord, not by us, by you alone is glory deserved") and ending with 118.

There follows another prayer, of which the Mishnah gives only the name: "Benediction over the Song". However Rabbi Johanan knew already in the third century[15] that this prayer concluded the

Psalms of Praise in almost every rite, and hence those of the Passover meal.

> The breath of every living thing shall bless thy name, O Lord our God, and the spirit of all flesh shall glorify and exalt thy memory, our King, for ever. From the eternity of the beginning to the eternity of the end, thou art God, and except for thee we have no redeeming and saving king, liberating and delivering, and provident and compassionate in every time of trouble and distress. We have no king but thee, O God of the first things and the last, God of all creatures, the Lord of all generations, who is lauded with many songs of praise, who conducts his universe with mercy and his creatures with compassion. The Lord slumbers not nor sleeps. It is he who awakens the sleeping, and rouses the slumbering, and makes the dumb converse, and loosens the bound, and steadies the falling, and straightens the bent. To thee alone do we give thanks. Though our mouth were full of song like the sea, and our tongue of rejoicing like the multitude of its waves, and our lips of praise like the breadth of the horizon, and our eyes were shining like the sun and the moon, and our hands were spread like the eagles of the sky, and our feet light as the hinds'—we should never thank thee enough, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, and to bless thy name, for one of the thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads of the good thou hast done with our fathers and us. From Egypt Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord our God, and from the house of slaves ransomed us, in famine fed us, and in plenty provided us, from the sword saved us, and from the pest delivered us, and from evil and serious illnesses lifted us. Till now thy compassions have helped us and thy mercies have not deserted us; and may Thou never, O Lord our God, desert us. Therefore, the limbs that thou hast distributed among us, and the spirit and breath that thou hast blown into our nostrils, and the tongue which thou hast placed in our mouths—they shall give thanks, and bless, and extol, and glorify, and exalt, and reverence, and sanc-

> tify and crown thy name, our King. For every mouth shall give thanks to thee, and every tongue shall swear to thee, and every knee shall kneel to thee, and every stature bow down before thee, and all hearts shall fear thee, the inward parts and reins shall sing to thy name. As it is written: "All my bones shall say: 'Lord, who is like unto Thee, / Who deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, / Yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?' " (Ps. 35:10). Who is like thee, and who is equal to thee, and who is comparable to thee, the God who is great, mighty, and awesome, God most high, master of heaven and earth? We shall praise thee, and laud thee, and glorify thee, and bless thy holy name. As it is said: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; / And all that is within me, bless His holy name." (Ps. 103:1).[16]

A medieval legend attributed this prayer to Peter. In the absence of data it is not possible to verify such an attribution, but it is easy to imagine that Peter, the only apostle to whom the Father had revealed the true nature of the Messiah (Mt. 16:16ff), would have grasped the significance of the Last Supper more clearly than the other apostles. In consequence, not finding in the psalms the full expression of his gratitude, he might have formulated a prayer in which he recognized that the incapacity of man to praise God adequately was the best expression of his own inward consciousness.

On the other hand, at this point in the Passover ceremonial another tradition (Tosefta) prescribes that it must end with the following verse from one of the Psalms of Praise: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." This conclusion anticipates both by invocation and implied desire the coming of the Messiah and his salvation. It is followed by a final hymn to God, Redeemer of his people.

THE LAST SUPPER

There have been various attempts to specify at exactly what point during the Passover meal Jesus pronounced the words of consecration, words which nobody before him had ever pronounced: "Take and eat of this, for it is my Body," and "Take and drink of

this, for it is my Blood." These words are the answer to all the prayers for messianic redemption: today everything is fulfilled.

The Gospel texts give us little information, but from them we know that Jesus washed the feet of the apostles (Jn. 13 : 1), consecrated bread, and a short time afterwards, towards the end of the meal, consecrated wine (Lk. 22 : 20). Finally, before going out, hymns were sung (Mk. 14 : 26; Mt 26 : 30). We would like to be able to situate these actions correctly in the framework of the Jewish ritual so as to reconstruct this unique Passover meal. All the actions of Jesus mentioned by the evangelists have their counterparts in the ritual actions of the Paschal meal, but at the Last Supper their aspect is different. A possible example of this is the washing of the disciples' feet. In the Passover rite, before the meal the master of the *seder* washes his hands before reciting the blessing over the bread; Jesus follows this custom, but he adapts it.

The words of consecration over the bread transcend all ritual tradition, but is it not possible that they were introduced by the formula already quoted, which is still used by every observant Jew when he breaks bread: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who bringest forth bread from the earth." The Last Supper was a meal overshadowed by the presentiment of death, and the apostles, even if they did not fully understand, surely felt something of this presentiment. In such a context the above blessing must have assumed the tone and the importance of a prophecy of the Resurrection. Jesus identified the bread with his body, so the implication was clear: just as the Lord brought forth bread from the earth so would he bring forth from the grave that body soon to be buried. Moreover, Jewish mysticism was later to speculate that the bread and wine represent both Israel and the Messiah.[17]

It is possible also to see in the broken *matzah*, which is blessed twice during the Passover meal and hence is particularly sacred, the bread which Jesus consecrated and gave to his apostles. In Jewish tradition the unleavened bread came to be eaten with the lamb, and in time it recalled the lamb;[18] this leads to the supposition that all the prescriptions relating to the lamb were applied to the bread.[19] Hence this would be the bread over which the Lamb of God, come to perfect the Jewish Passover sacrifice, would have pronounced the words of consecration.

In this matter all is conjecture, but since Luke expressly states that the wine was consecrated after the meal it seems possible to identify the cup consecrated by Jesus with that cup which was and still is blessed with particular solemnity at the close of the ritual meal.[20] It has already been said that a messianic character was attributed to this blessing and that the Jews expected David, prototype of the Messiah, to come himself to bless the cup. The Psalms of Praise seem particularly suitable to the experience the apostles were just then living; indeed parts of these psalms seem inexplicable outside of the particular context:

> . . . Death's cords were tightening round me,
> the nooses of Sheol;
> distress and anguish gripped me,
> I invoked the name of the Lord:
> "Lord, rescue me!" . . .
> Return to your resting place, my soul,
> the Lord has treated you kindly.
> He has rescued (me from death)
> my eyes from tears and my feet from stumbling.
> (I will walk in the Lord's presence
> in the land of the living.) . . .
> In my alarm, I declared,
> "No man can be relied on."
> What return can I make to the Lord
> for all his goodness to me?
> I will offer libations to my saviour,
> invoking the name of the Lord. . . .
> The death of the devout
> costs the Lord dear (Ps. 116:3ff).

In this psalm the agony of death alternates with a sense of security in the Lord's help, with a faith which we can define as faith in the resurrection. Perhaps Jesus alone understood the full meaning of these words. The apostles had heard them in an atmosphere of impending tragedy; this, and their uneasiness at the prophecy of Jesus' betrayal, had perhaps rendered them incapable of perceiving the hope and promise inherent in the psalm.

The Last Supper ended with the recitation of the "hymn" mentioned by the evangelists, in which we recognize the Psalms of Praise that closed the Passover meal. Thus was concluded the rite of Jesus which is both old and new, and which enables every believer to share in the new and definitive revelation made by God for his people. By means of the blessed wine and *matzah* the Jew was able to reactualize the redemption of Israel and to anticipate in petition and desire the completion of the redemption to be wrought by the Messiah. At the Last Supper the new words pronounced by Jesus rendered that completion present. That night the apostles could apply to one person the invocation which had for so long expressed the yearning of the Jews: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

Once again Jesus performs an action in the context of Jewish liturgy. At Nazareth he had wanted the synagogue to be the background of his proclamation that the salvation foretold by the prophets was present in his own person. Again, at the crucial moment of his earthly life when he celebrated his own sacrifice under the veil of signs, he chose the context of Jewish worship since this was the worship that he lived, resumed in himself and perfected.

In the brief summary of the history of salvation which the master of the *seder* makes for his guests, he mentions its beginning and the determining event of the Exodus. Prophets had foreseen that this history would end in the messianic age; this age for which Israel had been praying for centuries had now come. The Jewish religion is essentially messianic in that it is directed with dynamic tension towards the future. Past events are evoked only in so far as they have bearing on what is to come; they are relived in the rite only to orientate it towards the future, to the moment of its perfect maturity. This moment came in Jerusalem on that night in the "upper room". A new stage in salvation history had been reached, at the same time an arrival and a departure; henceforth men were to await only the final fulfilment, the glorious return of Christ at the parousia.

Until this moment Israel had sought union with God in many ways suggested by the Law, but from now on all these means were to be summed up in two: the paschal elements of bread and wine. All that the Law entailed with regard to circumcision, Sabbath, phylacteries, etc., had been followed in obedience to the explicit will of God. Up to this moment they had had for Israel a value that could be

called "quasi-sacramental" because they were exterior signs (*othoth*) expressing the union of the people with their God. Henceforth all these signs would be resumed in the Person of Christ whose presence is veiled by the bread and the wine. This Person in whom union with God is realized is himself the Word of God, the living expression of his will. He came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it in himself.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

Everybody knows that the latest liturgical reform of the Roman rite has enriched its Eucharistic Prayer with new forms. It also reintroduces a structure which was used in Rome during the early Christian period and which remained in force even outside the Roman liturgy. The following are the main constituents of this structure:

1. Praise to the Lord for his creation.
2. Praise for the Redemption wrought by Christ which culminated in his passion and death.
3. The account of the institution of the Eucharist which re-enacts Christ's passion, death and resurrection.
4. Often an expression of expectation of the final coming of Christ.
5. A final doxology.

The Eucharistic Prayers are seen to be formed of two parts. The first is commemorative in that it recalls past events; the second is a re-presentation of these events in a single event which brings the others to completion and itself projects into the future.

If the above outline is compared with the Jewish Passover the structural and theological similarities are striking. Let us examine the Eucharistic Prayer of Hippolytus, a third century Doctor of the Roman Church. It treats with the characteristic sobriety of the Roman liturgy the themes of which we have spoken. This sobriety makes them stand out all the more clearly.

> We render thanks unto thee, O God, through thy Beloved Servant Jesus Christ Whom in the last times Thou didst send [to be] a Saviour and Redeemer and the Angel of Thy counsel; Who is Thy Word inseparable [from Thee]; through

> Whom Thou madest all things and in Whom thou wast well-pleased. Whom thou didst send from heaven into the Virgin's womb, and Who conceived within her was made flesh, and demonstrated to be Thy son, being born of the Holy Spirit and a Virgin. Who fulfilling Thy will and procuring for Thee an holy people, stretched forth His hands for suffering (*or* for the passion) that he might release from sufferings them who have believed in Thee; who when He was betrayed to voluntary suffering (*or* the passion) in order that He might abolish death and rend the bonds of the devil and tread down hell and enlighten the righteous and establish the ordinance and demonstrate the resurrection, taking bread [and] making eucharist to Thee, said: Take eat this is My Body, which is (*or* will be) broken for you. Likewise also the cup, saying: This is My Blood which is shed for you. When ye do this ye do (*or* make ye) My "anamnesis". . . . through Whom honour and glory [be] unto Thee with [the] Holy Spirit in Thy Holy Church, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.[21]

The prayer begins with a brief synthesis of the history of salvation, but the perspective differs from that of the Jewish Passover. In the Christian text salvation history begins with the creation of the world as the first saving act of God; the Jewish text begins with the "creation" of the chosen people called by the Lord in the person of Abraham who was "a wandering Aramean". The Jewish liturgy remains faithful to the formulation of the most ancient synthesis of salvation history found in the Bible, while the Christian is here seen to be heir to the prophetic spirit. In the prophets, especially Isaiah, there is a change of perspective: the circumference of Israel's history is as it were broken, because creation is no longer seen apart from this history but as the first manifestation of God's saving power and goodness. This "circumference of Israel's history" was more than broken, it was enlarged to cosmic proportions in which the creation at the beginning was seen as but the first stage of a long development which was to include the call of Abraham, the liberation of Israel from Egypt, the conquest of the Promised Land, and was to end with the advent of the Messiah.

To the Christian the redemption wrought by Christ is that fulfilment awaited by primordial creation, a fulfilment of which it had from the beginning borne the need within itself. This fulfilment was made present in the Eucharistic meal, which represented the Sacrifice of Christ, because in it Christ repeated the central act of salvation history, synthesized in himself. Messianic redemption is already here awaiting the end of time.

The final doxology of the Canon expresses in a concise and theologically perfect form the essence of the same praise of God which the Jew, with truly oriental redundance, expresses in the Psalms of Praise and the "Benediction over the Song".

Many examples could be adduced but we prefer to limit ourselves to a single oriental liturgy, the Syriac tradition of Jesus which is inspired by the ancient rite of Jerusalem. It has the same general lines as other ancient Christian liturgies but it is more developed. It begins by praising God, the Creator. It recalls the fall of man as the occasion on which God proved himself to be a merciful Father, a Father who helps sinful mankind—first by the Law and the Prophets, and then by sending his Son to renew man in his own image. Then it shows the Son who

> when he was about to accept a voluntary death for us sinners, himself without sin, in the same night in which he was delivered up for the life and salvation of the world, took bread . . .[22]

Expectation of the glorious return of Christ is clearly expressed in the prayers immediately following the Consecration:

> . . . we sinners making the anamnesis of His lifegiving sufferings, His saving cross and death and burial and resurrection on the third day from the dead and session at the right hand of Thee, His God and Father, and His second glorious and fearful coming, when He shall come to judge the living and the dead, when He shall reward every man according to His works . . . we offer unto Thee O Lord . . .[23]

In our own reformed liturgy, particularly in the fourth Eucharistic Prayer, we have a synopsis of salvation history which culminates in the death and resurrection of Christ. In this prayer, too, salvation is regarded as a gift of the Holy Spirit who today and every day transforms bread and wine into the presence of the Lord whom we welcome with the proclamation of the hope that sustains us "until he comes in glory".

In the Jewish meal, the coming of the Messiah is awaited "on that day", according to the prophetic expression. The Christian meal, yesterday and today, recalls an event already begun that awaits only its conclusion. Both Jewish and Christian meals are messianic and both are dynamically orientated to the future. However, the objects of their expectation and hope are different; in the one, the realization of an event is awaited; in the other, an event is remembered that has already begun and is only awaiting its completion.

We will now give an outline of the similarities and differences already noticed between the Passover meal and the Eucharistic meal.

Jewish Passover

1) Praise to God for the creation of the people of Israel at the time of Abraham.
2) Praise to God for the redemption of Israel through Moses.
3) Re-enactment of the salvation of Israel in the person of every Jew who shares in the meal.
4) Expectation of the coming of the Messiah.
5) Psalms of Praise.

Christian Eucharist

1) Praise to God for the creation of the world.
2) Praise to God for the redemption of humanity through Christ.
3) Re-enactment of salvation—the Eucharist.
4) Expectation of the return of the Messiah.
5) Final doxology.

If the similarities between the Passover meal and the Christian Eucharist had been merely accidental they would have been limited

to particular instances only, but they appear in such numerous and diverse contexts that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they are connected by similar theological conceptions viewed from two different perspectives: 1) the conception of a God who personally directs the history of his people, and who continually intervenes in this history in a particular way at critical moments, and 2) the conception of a God who guides history towards a predetermined goal, towards the day on which the knowledge of the Lord will fill the whole earth "as the waters fill the sea", that day on which there will be "one Lord, and his name one".

Such a similarity of fundamental theological conception could not have failed to influence the forms of worship. It is of great interest for the Christian to see how all the essential events of his Christian life are rooted in Jewish religious life. A link is thus forged which is certainly determined by a common heritage of the Old Testament and by an affinity of liturgical practice persisting throughout the centuries.

THE LITURGICAL YEAR

The religious life of both Jew and Christian follows annual calendars whose developments are similar, and it is centered round various feasts which themselves possess many points of resemblance.

THE SABBATH AND SUNDAY

It must be borne in mind that for Christians the day consecrated to the Lord is Sunday; for the Jews it is the Sabbath (Saturday). At first glance this may seem to be a sharp divergence of liturgical practice, but when we consider the matter carefully we find elements that would indicate quite the contrary. Some of the earliest Fathers of the Church, e.g. St. Ignatius of Antioch, hint with seeming disapproval at the eastern custom, followed by many Christians, of observing the Sabbath. On the other hand, we know that the Eastern Churches, with the exception of that of Alexandria, kept the Sabbath as the day of liturgical assembly. Some Western Churches fasted on

the Sabbath, but the East went so far as to excommunicate those who did this. The Synagogue also forbade Jews to profane the Sabbath by penance. The *Constitutiones Apostolicae* (VII, 23,3,4) consider the Sabbath as a festal day like Sunday, the first commemorating creation and the second the resurrection. Holy Saturday alone was not a feast since creation should not rejoice on the day when the Son of the Creator descended into hell. All these elements which in Christian practice distinguish the Sabbath from the other days of the week suggest Jewish influence.[24]

Some very ancient texts make it clear that Christians solemnized Sunday as a kind of "weekly Easter", a weekly commemoration of the Resurrection. However, notable liturgists such as Duchesne and Cabrol consider the Christian service of Sunday worship to have developed as a sequel and a conclusion of the Sabbath synagogue worship. At the close of the synagogue service (by the time it was over there would be no fear of infringing the law limiting travel on the Sabbath) the faithful gathered together to celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice. If this is so the continuity of liturgical life between Synagogue and Church is clear: the celebration of the Sacrifice by which salvation is accomplished became the fulfilment of the liturgy in which salvation is announced.

This explains why the most ancient texts state that the Christians "broke bread" during the night. There is an example of this in the Acts of the Apostles where, at Traos, Paul continued speaking far into the night. A boy called Eutyches, who was sitting on a windowledge listening, was so overcome by sleep that he fell three storeys to the ground and died. Paul went down, clasped the boy to himself and brought him back to life. Afterwards he returned to the assembly and "broke bread". At dawn he left Traos (Acts 20 : 7ff). It was probably only later that Christians noticed the coincidence between the celebration of the Sunday liturgy and the Resurrection of the Lord.

From their Jewish background Christians would have retained an understanding of what the Sabbath meant, and this would have led them to remain faithful to its observances. It is a figure of the world to come, and is thus associated with messianic times, "the day that will be all Sabbath and rest for life everlasting".[25]

AUTUMN FESTIVALS AND THE CHRISTMAS-EPIPHANY CYCLE

Sunday is for Christians a "weekly Easter", a day on which they live in a special way the great mystery of the Resurrection; but such is the richness and complexity of this mystery that the festivals of the liturgical year are needed to present its various aspects. These aspects are thrown into relief and high-lighted by the daily Scripture readings. Here we must remember that the Synagogue also has a liturgical year, with noteworthy resemblances to that of the Church.

The liturgical year of the Church begins in late autumn, on the first Sunday of Advent. Advent is a period of preparation for Christmas; as Cabrol says, "In the Church, everything begins with the coming of Christ." However, this has not always been so; there exist clear traces of another inauguration of the year connected with Easter. The oldest lectionary of the Roman Church presumes a cycle of readings beginning on Easter night and ending on Holy Saturday; moreover, Ambrose alludes to Easter as the beginning of the year. This two-fold aspect of the beginning of the year is found not only in Jewish tradition but also very clearly in Semitic tradition in general.

In Jewish tradition the beginning of the year was connected with creation of which it was, in a sense, a re-enactment. Some of the ancient rabbis held that the world was created in the spring, in the month of Nisan (Rabbi Joshua, first century); others, that it was created in the autumn, in the month of Tishri (Rabbi Eliezer, first century).

However this may be, both the Jewish and the Christian liturgical years have two great festal cycles: autumn and spring in the Jewish, Christmas and Easter in the Christian. The Jewish autumn cycle is complex, comprising three great festivals: New Year, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles. The New Year is seen as the time when the Lord judges men and fixes their destinies for the year that is beginning. Some see it as the day when the world was conceived and on which the coming of the Messiah is awaited. When he comes the "great trumpet" will be sounded to reassemble all the dispersed tribes of Israel who will prostrate themselves before the holy mountain of Jerusalem; but already the Day of Atonement, and hence the consciousness of human guilt, casts its shadow. On the vigil of the New Year, before day-break, Israel begins to call on God for pardon.

Hence the New Year is essentially a feast of renewal; between the two great moments in the world's history, the beginning of time and the end of time, comes moral renewal through the forgiveness of sins. Christmas also marks a new beginning for the world, and already Jerome had associated it with the Jewish New Year because both celebrate renewal.

There are resemblances also between the periods of preparation for the Jewish New Year and for Christmas. On the ninth day of the month of Av (July–August), Jews recall the destruction of the Temple. The seven "Sabbaths of consolation" follow. Some scholars maintain that there was originally only one "Sabbath of consolation" which followed the ninth day of Av just as a "Sabbath of mourning" had preceded it, and then came six Sabbaths of preparation for the New Year. This last practice coincides with that of the early Church. Documents anterior to Gregory the Great prove that the period of preparation for Christmas (Advent) also lasted six weeks, as it still does in the Ambrosian rite.

In the "Sabbaths of consolation" we can already distinguish the two trends, penitential and messianic, which form the background of the Jewish autumnal cycle. For four weeks, a period corresponding with the duration of the present Roman Advent, special prayers called prayers "for pardon" are interwoven with the readings. These readings are full of messianic hope. "Console my people, console them" (Isaiah 40:1–26): in this text the prophet beseeches the Lord to remove all obstacles and to make the way straight for the coming of the Messiah. "Arise, shine out, (Jerusalem)" (Isaiah 60 : 1–22): here the prophet already sees the splendor of the Lord shining over the Holy City.

For the Church, the term "Advent" had a particularly messianic significance; originally it meant, not a period of preparation for the birth of Jesus, but the expectation of his second coming at the end of time. This is evident from the readings, which correspond with those of the synagogue indicated above. On the feast of the Epiphany Christians read the same passage from Isaiah (60 : 1–6) that the Jews read on the penultimate "Sabbath of consolation" before the New Year. Originally Advent was not a penitential season, and the latest reform of the Roman liturgy, desiring to stress the aspect of messianic expectation, has relegated to the background the penitential

element that had subsequently developed. This element is now to be found either in the September Ember Days or completely removed to Lent.

One last comparison: on the day after Christmas the Church celebrates the death of her first martyr, St. Stephen, and on the day after their New Year, the Jews fast in memory of the murder of Gedaliah. Created governor of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar, he fell victim to the Ammonite king, Baalis, and is venerated by the Jews as one of their chief martyrs.

This complex of elements common to the celebration of Christmas and to the Jewish New Year cannot be explained as the result of chance. Such an explanation becomes even less possible when we consider the similarities between two other festivals of the same cycle: the Epiphany and Tabernacles. The Pharisees attached great importance to the feast of Tabernacles and were severely criticized by the Sadducees for introducing into it some popular elements of a spectacular and festive nature. There were processions with waving palm and willow branches; flutes were played and giant candelabra lighted in the Court of the Women in the Temple. So great was the display of light that, according to the Mishna,[26] it overflowed into the city until every courtyard in Jerusalem was illuminated by it. Dignitaries danced around the candelabra while the Levites played zithers and horns. A very important element of this feast was the "water libation" which was poured over the altar to obtain rain. It was a celebration of water and light, elements which are to be found in the liturgical tradition of the Eastern Church on the feast of the Epiphany.

In the East it was the custom to call the Epiphany the "day of lights". The pilgrim Etheria (fourth century), who has left us a record of the earliest pilgrimage itinerary in Palestine, describes the custom in Jerusalem of celebrating the feast of the Epiphany with a great abundance of light. She is amazed at the splendor of the vestments and of the general adornment of the great Constantinian basilicas on that day. She stresses particularly the "luminaria" which shone with indescribable splendor in the rotunda of the Basilica of the Resurrection where the pilgrims came from Bethlehem before daybreak. We see from their homilies that the Fathers of the Church were fascinated by the refulgence of light on the feast of the Epiphany.

In the Eastern liturgy the feast is celebrated with water as well as with light. The custom of blessing the baptismal water on this day originated in Palestine where the Christians used to draw water from the Jordan at the traditional place of Jesus' baptism. They poured large quantities of balsam into this water, and the mixture was used for the baptism of catechumens. Hence the Epiphany is linked to baptism, which explains the convergence in this feast of the celebration of various manifestations of Jesus. The West concentrates on the visit of the Magi, which was the manifestation of Christ as King of all nations. The East concentrates on the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, where his divinity is manifested through the solemn testimony of his Father. The custom of the "luminaria" made it easy to pass from the baptism of Christ to that of the catechumens. This custom led naturally to the association of this feast called "day of light" with baptism, which Paul had already referred to as "illumination".

It is significant that the elements of water and light which converge in baptismal symbolism are both found in the Eastern liturgy of the Epiphany, while in the West the custom of conferring baptism on this occasion is completely disapproved. It is clear that the influence of Jewish custom was stronger in the East. Perhaps the lights that had filled Etheria with such wonder owed their origin to the temple lights which the rabbis had called "the great innovation of the Pharisees".

THE SPRING FESTIVITIES AND THE EASTER-PENTECOST CYCLE

The Jewish spring festivals are the Passover and Pentecost. Both had their origins in primitive nature observances, and at a later date were given a clearly Jewish historic character. Passover commemorates the liberation from Egypt and Pentecost the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. Mystical texts speak of the "betrothal" of Israel to God at the Passover and of their "wedding" at Pentecost.

The Jewish Pentecost, according to the Bible, was a feast of thanksgiving for the harvest, at that time of year in its final stages. This characteristic was even more obvious in the liturgy of the ancient synagogue, but it was gradually superseded by the commemoration of the gift of the Law. The liberation or redemption of Israel, begun with the Exodus and commemorated at the Passover meal,

came to be understood as completed only when God gave the Law, since the Law made Israel truly his people. It is impossible to establish with certainty the exact time when the commemoration of the giving of the Law was substituted for the harvest thanksgiving. However, in a very old pre-talmudic document[27] dating from the two first centuries after Christ, there are references to the tradition of reading the scriptural account of the giving of the Law (Exodus 19) and also to the contemporaneous tradition mentioned in Deuteronomy 16 : 9. "You are to count seven weeks . . . from the time (Passover) you begin to put your sickle into the standing corn. You must then celebrate the feast of weeks (Pentecost) for the Lord your God" (Deut. 16 : 9). This text proves the agricultural character of the feast. Many scholars hold that the change was due to the influence of the Church. At Pentecost she commemorated the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit who, as proof positive that the messianic era had come, had set his seal upon her. This feast marked the promulgation to the world of the renewed Law, and it is conceivable that the Synagogue would have wished to reaffirm God's manifestation to Israel. Hence the choice of those prophetic readings which stress the theophanic aspect of the feast. In Ezekiel's vision of the chariot (1 : 1ff), the prophet describes how the "glory of the Lord" appeared to him:

> Above the vault . . . was something that looked like a sapphire; it was shaped like a throne and high up on this throne was a being that looked like a man. . . . all around him from what seemed his loins upwards was what looked like fire, and a light all round like a bow in the clouds on rainy days . . .

Habbakuk (3 : 3ff) also speaks of the Lord who "comes", whose majesty veils the heavens and whose glory fills the earth.

On the other hand, at a later period there is the prescribed reading from the Book of Ruth at Pentecost. A relationship was evidently seen between the feast of Pentecost and the agricultural background of David's grandmother. However, a later midrash attempted to gloss over the agricultural aspect by stating that the sufferings of Ruth were recalled at Pentecost to teach Israel that to

obtain the gift of the Law she too must suffer. The aim of such an interpretation was to stress an unessential element of the book of Ruth so that it could be adapted to a celebration of Pentecost centered rather on the Law than upon an agricultural festival.

Until its latest reform, the lectionary of the Roman Church had retained the reading of those passages of Scripture which reflect the agricultural element of Pentecost: "When you enter the land that I give you, and gather in the harvest there . . ." (Lev. 23 : 9–22); "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them: '. . . if you live according to my laws, if you keep my commandments and put them into practice, I will give you the rain you need at the right time; the earth shall give its produce and the trees of the countryside their fruits' " (Lev. 26 : 3–12); "When you come to the land the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance . . . you must set aside the first-fruits of all the produce of the soil . . . you must put them in a pannier and go to the place where the Lord your God chooses to give his name a home" (Dt. 26 : 1–11). Such readings no longer had a place in the daily liturgy of the synagogue, but here the Church was conserving intact the most genuine Jewish liturgical tradition. This is an interesting example of exchange between the Church and Synagogue, each giving and at the same time receiving.

The links between the Christian and the Jewish paschal liturgies are somewhat different. There are so many similarities that only the principal examples can be mentioned here. For Christians as for Jews the Pasch is the feast of liberation, and the typological connection between it and the Exodus from Egypt is one of the most frequent themes in the writings of the Fathers. In the West, baptism was conferred upon the catechumens on the vigil of Easter to signify that as Christ passed from death to life on that night, so is the neophyte born to new life. Israel had become the freed people of God by miraculously passing through the waters of the Red Sea, so the Fathers considered that the catechumen was freed by baptism from the slavery of sin to become a member of the renewed people of God. As the Israelites had been saved from death in Egypt by the blood of the lamb, which caused the destroying angel of God to pass by their homes, so do Christians receive eternal life through the blood of the Lamb of God. These constant traditions of the Church are particularly stressed in the liturgy of the Easter cycle.

The Roman lectionary, before its most recent reform, and the order of synagogue readings had many points of similarity. The following example is somewhat polemic in spirit.

On the third Sabbath of preparation for the Passover, Numbers 19 : 1–22 is read in the synagogue. This passage gives prescriptions for the preparation of the lustral water used to purify those sons of Israel who had in some way contracted ritual impurity. The reading which follows is from Ezekiel (36 : 18–38). It speaks of the "pure water" which the Lord will pour down upon the people in the messianic age and which will cleanse them from every defilement. The theme of this Sabbath is therefore water, beginning with the purification of Israel then being effected, and ending with the eschatological purification.

The theme of water is also present in the Roman liturgy in many of the readings for the third week of Lent. On Monday the account of the healing of Naaman the Syrian in the Jordan is read; on Friday that of Moses bringing forth water from the rock. This latter is followed by the New Testament account of the meeting of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus tells her that he can give "living water". Wednesday's gospel reading begins with the question: "Why do your disciples break away from the tradition of the elders? They do not wash their hands when they eat food" (Mt. 15 : 2). The polemical character of the question about legal purification is thrown into higher relief if we admit the possibility of its having been chosen in response to the synagogue reading on the subject of legal purification. The gospel passage for Tuesday is perhaps even more polemical; it quotes the words of Jesus when he conferred upon the apostles the power to forgive sins. Perhaps this passage was chosen by the Church to affirm the belief that it is not ritual purification by water that remits sin, but the pardon given by God through the ministry of his priests. Here there is no direct correspondence between the readings of the Synagogue and those of the Church; instead, the synagogue readings are a kind of polemical incitement which determines the choice of the Church. The reading from Ezekiel about the "pure water" of the eschatological purification is used by the Church but it is transposed to the Wednesday of the following week.

The Synagogue recalls the sacrifice of Isaac on the feast of the New Year, since it was through that sacrifice that so many favors were given to Israel. The Church recalls the great test of the Patriarch Abraham at the Easter vigil, seeing in this incomplete sacrifice the prefiguration of that sacrifice to come in which blood would indeed be shed for the redemption of mankind.

Recent studies,[28] on the other hand, encourage the theory that at an early date the account of the sacrifice of Isaac formed part of the Passover liturgy of the Synagogue, and that only later was it transposed to the festal cycle of autumn. If this theory is accurate we have a similar situation to that suggested for Pentecost: the Church conserved the older tradition while the Synagogue, for polemical reasons, modified its lectionary.

When we compare the liturgical readings of the Synagogue with those of the Church, we cannot but perceive that they are connected. At times the Synagogue would seem to influence the Church, at others, the contrary seems to be the case. On certain occasions there is evidence of a true continuity of worship; on others a certain controversial opposition is felt.

This paper has touched upon some of the more obvious and important points of comparison between the Jewish and the Christian liturgies, without going into great detail. It would seem, however, that enough has been said to justify the assumptions that there are elements of relationship between the Synagogue and the Church; that these elements point to the existence of a certain community of life; and finally, that throughout the centuries down to our own times the Christian liturgy has never forgotten that it originates at some time in the remote past within the framework of the Jewish liturgy.

Notes

1. *The Authorised Prayer Book,* revised edition, commentary and notes by Dr. Joseph H. Hertz (New York: Bloch, 1948), p. 423.
2. A. Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship* (Oxford, 1960); R. Houston Smith, "Exodus Typology in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal de littérature biblique,* 1962, pp. 329 ff.
3. *Tosefta Sukkah* 3, 3–18.

4. M. Righetti, *Storia liturgica*, III, p. 62.
5. *The Works Now Extant of Saint Justin the Martyr*, translated, with notes and indices (Oxford: Parker, 1861), pp. 51–52.
6. See Righetti, I, c.
7. *Berakhot*, 39b, 46.
8. *Mahzor Vitry*, p. 294, v. 96.
9. *Pesahim*, 10,4.
10. Jerusalem Talmud, *Pesahim*, 10, 4, 37d.
11. G. von Rad, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament* (Genève, 1963), pp. 112 ff.
12. *The Passover Haggadah*, edited by Nahum N. Glatzer, revised edition (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 51.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 55. The formula of Rabbi Akiba has been preserved practically unchanged throughout the centuries; see Maimonides, *Mishna Torah*, Hilkoth hames u-masah, end.
14. *Berakhot*, 48a.
15. *Pesahim*, 118a. See Rabbenu Shlomo bar Yitzhak in *Mahzor Vitry*, p. 282.
16. *The Passover Haggadah*, pp. 79, 81.
17. E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, Vol. VI (New York: Princeton University Press, 1953–1968), p. 182.
18. Rashi, *Ad Pesahim*, 119b.
19. *Enciclopedia Talmudith*, I, 134.5.
20. Some scholars would like to see in Mt. 26:29 a proof that Jesus, waiting for the fulfilment of the redemption, did not bless and consecrate this cup; but the matter is not clear.
21. G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945), pp. 157–158.
22. F.E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, Vol. I *Eastern Liturgies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), pp. 87–88.
23. Dix, *op. cit.*, pp. 190–1.
24. Righetti, *op cit.*, II, 18ff., 29f.
25. *Tamid*, 7,4.
26. *Sukkah*, 5,3.
27. *Tosefta Megillah*, 4.
28. R. le Déault, *La nuit pascale* (Rome: Institut Biblique Pontifical, 1963), pp. 133 ff.

The Beginnings of Christian Liturgy in Judaism

Sharon Burns

The early Christians continued to worship in the temple and synagogue, but the eucharistic rite, which is our liturgical act of sacrifice, began as a sacred meal celebrated in a house at a family table.[1] The home in Judaism was also a center of worship. The parents had the duty of circumcising sons and the ceremony was performed at home. It was also the parents' duty to instruct their children. Sabbath meals were occasions for much joy, with their ceremonial *berakhot*, or blessings, over the food and wine. The meal began with the solemn breaking of the bread by the father or person presiding, followed by a succession of blessings over the food and actions of this ritual. The great blessing of the final cup synthesized this whole pre-Christian spirituality which could rightly be called "eucharistic". The Christian prayers of the Eucharist belong to this class of Jewish prayers called the *berakhah* which gives praise and thanks for God's gifts. Christian celebrations of the Eucharist were the product of the combination of the blessings associated with scripture readings in the synagogue and the blessings associated with the ceremonial meal in the home. To be more precise, the Eucharist took its form from the *berakhah* over the last cup which ended the meal. The words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper, recorded in the synoptics and Paul (Mt. 26:26–30; Mk. 14:22–25; Lk. 22:19f; 1 Cor. 11:23ff), follow the normal pattern of a Jewish ceremonial meal.[2]

The *berakhah*, a most ancient expression of the Jewish spirit of prayer, derives from the temple liturgy. It exemplifies the Hebrew

ideal of hallowing creation and consecrating everything and every action to God with thanksgiving—or rather, everything is *consecrated by thanksgiving*. St. Paul expresses this clearly in his First Letter to Timothy:

> "Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected when it is taken with thanksgiving, since it is consecrated by the word of God, and by prayer" (4:4–5).

The *berakhah* is the chief means that Jews have, both individually and communally, of maintaining a theocentric attitude toward life. In other words, it is their "sacrifice of praise" which sacralizes every act of daily life. Because Jesus was so devout a Jew, thoroughly imbued with this remarkable attitude of blessing-thanksgiving, the first Christians surely shared fully in this practice of Jewish piety. The spirituality proper to the *berakhah* is summed up in the whole understanding of Jewish "gnosis": it is an act of faith in God who is made "known" through every creature and every event. This prayer of faith is an act of abandonment to the will of God made known through His word. This sacralization of the whole of life, rooted in the "knowledge" of God's provident designs, found its focus no longer in the sacrifices of the temple but in the common meal of the family gathered together for the Sabbath or solemn festivals. The same can be said of the community meals of the *Havurot,* those devout communities whose importance has been revealed to us through Qumran. Many scholars maintain that the fellowship of friends formed by Christ and his apostles constituted a *Havurot.*[3] The Qumran texts, and what Philo and Josephus write about the Essenes, confirm the fact that for the most devout of Israel, including the Jewish priests, this ritual meal had come to replace the temple sacrifice.

Of all human acts, none lends itself better than the meal to this consecration by prayer of all the gifts God has given. When we Christians consecrate persons or things, we consider them set apart for sacred use. But the Jewish *berakhah* is in the first place a blessing of *God,* an act of praise and thanksgiving to Him, and the person or thing is seen as belonging to Him. The *berakhah* always begins with a formula like: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe . . ." How much better, it seems to me, to praise God thus

for "bringing food out of the earth" than saying our "Bless us O Lord and these Thy gifts . . . ." The blessings over the bread and wine at the renewed liturgy of the Eucharist is just such a *berakhah*.[4]

How essential it is for us to grasp the full meaning of the Jewish *berakhah* which Jesus prayed continually and over the bread and wine of the Last Supper, is emphasized by Louis Bouyer who contends that we can only understand the Eucharist properly through an understanding of its prehistory in Jewish piety. He claims further that

> "all the futile arguments and fruitless controversies over the interpretation of the Eucharist among Christians only appeared with the break that took place between Jewish and Christian thought."[5]

There are extant numerous documents which enable us to see the actual passage of the Christian eucharistic celebration from the Jewish *berakhah*. For example, there are texts of prayers in the seventh book of the *Apostolic Constitutions* (given its final form in the fourth century), which are most assuredly Jewish formularies, altered by the Christians who merely added a few words here and there to apply to Christ and the church what had been said of the Word, of Wisdom, or of the people of Israel. The same is true for the famous prayer for the Eucharist in the *Didache*.

> "It is certainly clear from these texts [and others] that the Christian Eucharist is not only derived from the Jewish *berakhah* but began by simply taking it over."[6]

The influence of Jewish piety on the primitive church in its worship can be discerned nowhere so clearly as in the prayers we find in early Christian literature and the earliest Christian liturgical texts.

> "Nobody, in reading the pre-Christian forms of the prayers in the Jewish Liturgy and the prayers of the early Church, can fail to notice the similarity of atmosphere of each, or to recognize that both proceed from the same mould."[7]

The Christian liturgy emphasizes praise and thanksgiving as does Jewish prayer. The *Kedushah* or "holy, holy, holy," remains an essential prayer in the Christian liturgy. Jesus' great prayer, the Our Father, is first and foremost a Jewish expression of worship; every element of it finds a parallel in Jewish literature.[8] "Amen," "Alleluia," and other responses at the end of prayers, the confession of sins, and the recitation of psalms were also taken over from the synagogue. Historical remembrances, such as the exodus, the passover, which occur in many of the Jewish prayers were used by the church and adapted in a Christian sense. As with the prayers taken from the Jewish liturgy and applied to belief in Christ, so too have the psalms been "Christologized" in the New Testament; the evangelists used them to show Christ's fulfillment of prophecy.

The psalter has often been described as the "Hymn Book of the Second Temple" (520–515 B.C.–70 A.D.). Many of the synagogue prayers during this period contained phrases from the psalms, but authorities dispute whether psalms were sung in the synagogue this early. Some argue that from early times, psalms that were appointed to be sung in the temple on certain days and festivals, were also sung in the synagogue. They also maintain that from this custom the use of psalmody in the church ante-dated its introduction in the synagogue. Jewish psalms other than those included in the canonical book of 150 psalms were written in the pre-Christian era. For instance, in the middle of the first century, B.C., a group of messianic psalms (Eighteen Psalms of Solomon) emanated from the Pharisees. This continuing composition of psalms was taken up in the early Christian communities and this new psalmody became an integral part of their worship. Many of the sayings of Jesus preserved in the gospels are in poetic form,[9] notably in its Aramaic form; among them are the Our Father, the beatitudes, and eucharistic discourses in John. The earliest form of psalmody we can trace in the Eucharistic celebration is the gradual.[10] A close link between Jewish and Christian custom that goes back to very ancient times is the singing of the Hallel Psalms, the psalms of thanksgiving and praise (113–118), at the Jewish Passover and the Christian Easter.

The daily offices prayed by the early Christians have their roots in the practice of pious Jews in the time of Jesus. Three times a day, morning, noon, and late afternoon, at the hours of the temple sacri-

fices, the devout Jew would turn towards Jerusalem and offer prayer (Ps. 55:18; Dan. 6:11; Acts 2:15; 10:3, 9, 30; 3:1). Through this daily practice, the Jew far from Jerusalem was able to join his personal prayers to the public worship in the holy city. This Jewish custom continued in the church even after it became predominantly Gentile.[11] By the end of the second century, the times of daily prayer were increased to six: from dawn to midnight. How many Christians followed this pattern of prayer we do not know. However, by the third century many individual ascetics as well as communities of men and women vowed to a life of prayer and good works were the forerunners of later monastic communities which built their prayer-life around the daily hours of the office.

The Hebrew psalms are the oldest and most enduring prayers of Christians. Revived interest in them, attempts at new translations and musical settings, their use among the laity in morning and evening prayer in parishes, are all hopeful signs of renewal in the worship of the contemporary church. Liturgical scholars, however, remind us that

> "creative innovation in such renewals . . . can only be effective if it is rooted in a sound knowledge of tradition."[12]

And our tradition is rooted in the Judaism of Jesus' day.

The description I have given of Jewish piety and its influence on the nascent church is not a christianized sketch. Certainly, I have chosen those elements from Jewish tradition and the Judaism of the first century which were related to the emerging church, for Christianity and its spirituality were born precisely from the convergence of these elements. This is not to ignore Christianity's creative newness, but to acknowledge the "providential preparations granted by God."[13] Also, our sketch is that of not just any kind of Jewish piety but the piety of those Jews whom St. Luke describes as "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Lk. 2:25). It is the piety of mainly Palestinian Jews such as those who became the first followers of Jesus.

Notes

1. Hebert, "Worship in the Old Testament", p. 28.
2. We shall not enter into the discussion held among scholars as to

whether Jesus instituted the Eucharist at a Passover meal or at a *Havurot* (fellowship) supper (the *Kiddush*) on the eve of Passover. In any case, the gospel writers evidently wished to stress the Passover theme in their accounts.

3. Cf. W.O.E. Oesterley, *The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 172.
4. "Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life." (R) "Blessed be God for ever." "Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink." (R) "Blessed be God for ever." *The Roman Missal: The Sacramentary* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1974), p. 414.
5. Bouyer, "Jewish and Christian Liturgies", p. 42.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
7. Oesterley, *The Jewish Background,* p. 125.
8. For an excellent work on the Our Father produced by Jewish and Christian scholars, see *The Lord's Prayer and Jewish Liturgy,* edited by Jakob J. Petuchowski and Michael Brocke (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978). For a very brief table indicating the parallels in Jewish prayers of the elements of the Lord's Prayer, see A.Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development,* (New York: Sacred Music Press, Henry Holt and Co., 1932), Appendix I, pp. 301–308.
9. Cf. C.F. Burney, *The Poetry of Our Lord: The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925); Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954).
10. The gradual, from *gradus,* step, was sung from the step of the pulpit where the lesson for the day was read or intoned.
11. Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., *The Psalms in Christian Worship* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), p. 54.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
13. Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament,* p. 26.

"Where Two or Three . . .": The Rabbinic Concept of Shekhinah and Matthew 18:20

Joseph Sievers

I. THE ORIGINS OF THE TERM *SHEKHINAH*

Rabbinic literature commonly expresses the idea of the presence of God by the term *Shekhinah*. It is an abstract feminine noun derived from the verb *shakhan* which means to dwell, rest, repose, abide. This verb and its derivatives are frequently used in the Old Testament with reference to God and to his sanctuary.[1] *Shekhinah*, however, never occurs in the Hebrew Bible or, as far as I have been able to determine, in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Thus, when scholars have searched for the origin of the concept, they have relied almost exclusively on the rabbinic texts themselves. While this method is legitimate, it leads to meager results, for the term is not well attested before the generation of Rabbi Akiba in the early second century.

Some rabbinic references to *Shekhinah* may be earlier than that, but they are found in texts which have undergone changes until considerably later. Therefore, they cannot be used as reliable guides. One example is the reference to the "abode (*Shekhinah*) of his might in the loftiest heights" in the *Aleinu* prayer which in its earliest form goes back to Temple times and is now part of the daily service.[2] Another prayer, an addition to the Eighteen Benedictions attributed to the *hasidim ha-rishonim* ("pious men of old"), is preserved in the ninth century (or later) Midrash on Psalms: "Merciful (Lord), in your great compassion return your *Shekhinah* to Zion and restore the

Temple service to Jerusalem".[3] If we knew that the *hasidim harishonim* were connected with the *Asidaioi* of the early second century, this prayer could be considered a reference to the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV (167 BC). But unfortunately we know too little about this group of "pious men of old" to ascertain the historical setting reflected here. Much less can we be sure about the original wording of the prayer.[4]

The references to the *Shekhinah* in Targum Onkelos as well as in the various recensions of the Palestinian Targum are numerous. Although the Targumim contain much earlier material, they were not redacted in final form before the third century. Therefore, they are of little help in establishing the origin of the term *Shekhinah.*[5]

A more fruitful search for the origins of the concept of *Shekhinah* may be carried on outside rabbinic literature. Second Maccabees, written in Greek and completed before 63 BC, may give us a clue. While reporting events of 161 BC, it includes a prayer of Jerusalem priests for the purity of the "Temple of your indwelling" (*naon tēs sēs skēnōseōs*).[6] *Skēnōsis,* an abstract feminine noun, finds its closest Hebrew parallel in meaning as well as in form in *Shekhinah.*[7]

Although he was not referring to this specific passage, Goldberg suggested that the designation of the Temple as "House of God's dwelling" may have been at the origin of the term *Shekhinah.*[8]

Second Maccabees appears to corroborate that conjecture by showing us an early stage of the development which led to the meaning "God's presence", or "God" (who is present in the Temple), instead of simply a "dwelling". It is no longer possible to determine when this development was completed, but a date some time before the destruction of the Second Temple (70 AD) is most plausible.[9] The meaning of *Shekhinah,* however, did not remain confined to the divine presence in the sanctuary, as we shall see.

II. *SHEKHINAH* AND TORAH

In rabbinic literature *Shekhinah* came to signify all modes of God's presence in past, present, and eschatological future. In other words, it became a synonym for God whenever and wherever his nearness was implied. This fact, however, did not eliminate the dis-

tinction and even tension between different forms of divine presence.[10] Here we concentrate on those situations for which the rabbis thought the presence of the *Shekhinah* possible among three or even two people.

A passage in the *Mekhilta,* a relatively early midrash on Exodus,[11] shows us the connection between God's presence in the Temple and among people outside the Temple. It interprets Exod 20,24, "In every place where I cause my name to be mentioned I will come to you and bless you", as follows:

> Where I reveal myself to you, that is, in the Temple. Hence they said: The Tetragrammaton is not to be pronounced outside of the Temple.[12]—R. Eliezer b. Jacob says: If you come to my house I will come to your house, but if you do not come to my house I will not come to your house. The place my heart loveth, thither my feet lead me.—In connection with this passage the sages said: Wherever ten persons assemble in a synagogue the *Shekhinah* is with them, as it is said: "God standeth in the congregation of God" (Ps 82,1). And how do we know that he is also with three people holding court? It says: "In the midst of the judges he judgeth" (ibid.). And how do we know that he is also with two? It is said: "Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another", etc. (Mal 3,16). And how do we know that he is even with one? It is said: "In every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come unto thee and bless thee".[13]

This Midrash presents anonymously two opposing opinions: one restricts God's presence to the Temple, the other affirms it also for other places. The saying of R. Eliezer b. Jacob stands apart from them and tells us nothing about the setting of the two traditions.[14] It is, however, an indication that the redactor understood the problem to be God's presence or absence, not where the Tetragrammaton may be pronounced. We should note that the proof text for the *Shekhinah's* presence among ten in the synagogue or "three people holding court", that is, those who judge, is taken from a psalm that was

part of every Tuesday's liturgy in the Temple (*mTamid* 7,4). This observation does not allow us to date the origin of this idea or to consider identical God's presence inside and outside the Temple, but it weakens Goldberg's thesis that there was no connection between the ideas of the *Shekhinah* in the Temple and in the community.[15]

The presence of the *Shekhinah* among three or more judges is a recurrent theme in rabbinic literature. It is assumed in criminal and civil cases as well as during their deliberations concerning the fixing of the calendar.[16]

The *Mekhilta* attaches no conditions other than fear of the Lord and remembrance of his name to the presence of the *Shekhinah* with one or two persons. In this it differs from most other traditions which consider preoccupation with Torah as the main requisite. Several sayings in the Mishnah tractate *Abot* illustrate this. They include the only two occurrences of the term *Shekhinah* in the entire Mishnah.[17] The first and best known saying is attributed to Rabbi Hananiah ben Teradyon:

> If two sit together and the words between them are not of Torah, then that is a session of scorners, as it is said, *Nor hath sat in the seat of the scornful.*[18] But if two sit together and the words between them are of Torah, then the *Shekhinah* is in their midst, as it is said, *Then they that feared the Lord spoke on with another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name* (Mal 3,16).[19]

Rabbi Hananiah ben Teradyon was a contemporary of Rabbi Akiba. According to the Talmud he died a martyr's death in the persecution of Hadrian (c. 135 AD). His exceptional emphasis on study and observance of Torah is highlighted by the story that he was burned alive wrapped in a Torah scroll.[20] The above saying is fitting for such a man in a time of persecution. In its present form, including the reference to Torah, it may be original with Hananiah. The idea of the *Shekhinah* with two people, however, is a concept that can be traced to the first century.[21] The relation of this tradition to the above-

quoted *Mekhilta* passage is not clear. But it is reasonable to suppose that the belief in the *Shekhinah's* presence among at least ten people existed earlier.

A parallel to Rabbi Hananiah's saying is attributed to his contemporary Rabbi Halafta of Sepphoris in *Abot de Rabbi Natan*. He speaks of the presence of the *Shekhinah* with any "two or three who sit together in the marketplace and the words between them are of Torah".[22] Similarly, in *Abot* Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai (c. 100–170) is quoted as saying: "When three eat at one table and do speak words of Torah there, it is as though they have eaten from the table of God".[23] *Abot* continues with a variety of sayings concerning the importance of Torah in one's life. Included is a dictum of Rabbi Halafta of Kefar Hananiah (late second century) maintaining that the *Shekhinah* is with those who occupy themselves with Torah, be they ten, five, three, two or only one.[24]

In this context "Torah" should not be understood too narrowly as only the Pentateuch or as the Written and Oral Law in any strictly defined sense. In rabbinic literature the term is used in a variety of meanings, often including all the living halakhic traditions and their applications in life. A text dealing with the question of the *Shekhinah* among judges states that "also court proceedings are Torah", and one rabbi maintained that even the everyday talk of people in the Holy Land is Torah.[25] At least one modern homiletic commentary explains that the saying of Rabbi Hananiah ben Teradyon implies an "obligation to apply and reflect the 'words of Torah', its values, its norms and laws, in our everyday social and business world".[26]

In rabbinic thought occupation with Torah is not merely an intellectual enterprise, but a sharing in God's own activity.[27] It is because of this that Torah is considered a way to experience his nearness, the *Shekhinah*.

An area where the presence of the *Shekhinah* with two people is particularly stressed is married life. God is considered the third partner. A saying attributed to Rabbi Akiba reads as follows: "When husband and wife are worthy, the *Shekhinah* abides with them; when they are not worthy fire consumes them". This saying is not simply a play on words, not just a pun, but it really seems to express the possibility of God's nearness to the married partners.[28]

This and numerous other instances show the ethical implications of the presence of the *Shekhinah*. People must be worthy of it. Sinful behavior, such as murder, adultery, idolatry, and slander, causes the departure of the *Shekhinah*.[29] On the other hand, "whoever is meek will ultimately cause the *Shekhinah* to dwell with man on earth".[30]

III. THE CONTEXT OF MATT 18,20

Whereas it is not clear how widespread the concept of *Shekhinah* was in the first century AD, the Gospels of Matthew and John appear to attest to its use.

Time and again scholars have pointed out that a most striking parallel to the saying of Hananiah b. Teradyon that we quoted above, is found in Matt 18,20: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst". This verse forms part of a chapter of instructions for the early Christian community.

In its present context it stands between the teachings concerning reconciliation (v 15–17) and forgiveness (v 21–22). It is preceded by the promise that the prayer of two people offered in unison will be answered (v 19) and by the bestowal of the power to bind and to loose (v 18). Verses 19–20 are clearly set off from their context by the introductory formulas in vv 19 and 21, and by their form and contents. They constitute two originally independent sayings, although v 20 is redactionally linked to v 19 by the conjunction "for" (*gar*).[31]

There have been several recent in-depth studies of Matt 18 in general[32] and 18,20 in particular.[33] Therefore, instead of attempting a complete exegesis, I shall address myself to the question of what light rabbinic texts throw on v 20 and vice versa. So far, little has been done to try to explain the nature of this relationship. One of the reasons for this certainly lies in the difficulty of relating a gospel passage dating from the first century to rabbinic sayings redacted over a century later. Sandmel rightly warns of "parallelomania".[34] And yet, a careful attempt at comparison of parallel features can be made.

m. Abot 3:2	*Abot de Rabbi Nathan* B Ch. 34, p. 74	Matt 18,20
If two	If two	Where two
	or three	or three
sit together	sit together	are gathered
	in the marketplace	
and the words	and the words	
between them	between them	
are of Torah	are of Torah	in my name
then the *Shekhinah* is	then the *Shekhinah*	there am I
	is revealed	
in their midst.	to them.	in their midst.

On the surface the differences are quite obvious: Matthew has "my name" instead of "words of Torah", and refers to Jesus instead of the *Shekhinah*. These divergences, however, are more understandable when we recognize that we are dealing with a "parallel with a fixed difference".[35] Almost consistently the gospels attribute to Jesus what rabbinic texts say about God and the Torah. If we further consider that the passages under consideration are distinct theological statements and not general ethical norms, the parallelism becomes even more interesting.

Since the parallels are so close, there is reasonable probability that some literary relationship exists. It is not to be excluded *a priori* that some rabbis knew Matthew's Gospel or similar Christian traditions and adopted some of them for their own use. It is, however, not likely that the theological development of a concept as important as *Shekhinah* was a direct response to Christianity. Thus, most scholars readily admit that Matt 18,20 is based on a Jewish tradition and not vice versa.[36]

IV. ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 18,20

Two or three: the quorum for a special form of presence may simply be left vague or it may be an echo of the "two or three witnesses" mentioned in v 16b. There are, however, other possibili-

ties. The concept of the *Shekhinah* between three judges may have been at work in this formulation. This cannot be proven, but because of the previous verses concerning Church proceedings in the case of a person's misconduct, it should not be dismissed lightly. In fact, a connection with Ps 82,1 and its rabbinic interpretation becomes even more plausible in a parallel apocryphal saying "Where there are three (gods), they are gods."[37] It is unclear whether there is any direct relationship between the *two or three* in Matt 18,20 and in *Abot de R. Natan B* quoted above.

Are gathered (eisin . . . synēgmenoi): It has frequently been suggested, now again by Englezakis,[38] that Matt 18,20 refers to liturgical gatherings only. This, however, goes counter to the evidence: (a) In the NT the verb *synagein* is rarely used for liturgical assemblies. In Matthew, where it occurs most frequently (24 times), it never has such connotations. (b) V 20 speaks in a more general way than v 19 and does not specify a particular setting. (c) Even v 19 is not strictly limited to liturgical prayer. (d) Vv 15–18 deal with disciplinary, not liturgical matters. (e) 1 Cor 5,4, which in several respects resembles Matt 18,20, speaks of an assembly for disciplinary action, not liturgical celebration (see Col 3,17). (f) *m. Abot* 3,2b and similar rabbinic texts do not presuppose a liturgical setting or any *formal* gathering.[39]

In my name (eis to emon onoma): It has frequently been indicated that this phrase translates the Hebrew/Aramaic *lishmi*.[40] This can be rendered "for my sake". One should compare a saying attributed to Rabbi Yohanan the Sandal-maker (mid-second century): "Every assembly which is for the sake of Heaven (*leshem shamayim*) will in the end endure; but one which is not for the sake of Heaven will not endure in the end" (*m. Abot* 4,11; see 5,17). Heaven is here, as frequently in rabbinic and NT texts, a synonym for God. We should note that several biblical texts which the rabbis connected with *Shekhinah* speak of God's name. Mal 3,16, the prooftext for the *Shekhinah* between two, speaks of those who "think of his name" (see Exod 20,24).

It is unclear whether in the Jewish tradition underlying Matt 18,20 there was a reference to the Torah or to God. In several passages in the synoptic gospels Jesus takes the place of Torah.[41] This fact, however, has to be seen in conjunction with Matt 5,17: "Think

not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them".

There am I: This statement is the most radical departure from Jewish tradition. Some authors consider it in polemical antithesis to the rabbinic concept of God's presence.[42] It appears, however, that Matthew's source does not intend to replace but to explain that idea: the *Shekhinah* is manifested in Jesus. This impression is reinforced by the present context which speaks of reconciliation, prayer, and forgiveness, rather than of polemics.

It obviously cannot be proven that the underlying Jewish tradition actually used the term *Shekhinah*. The likelihood, however, is rather great. We are dealing with a motif of presence which can easily be traced to OT notions (e.g., Exod 20,24). But v 20 is modeled on rabbinic formulations which in this context use *Shekhinah*. An allusion to the concept of *Shekhinah* itself may probably be found in the prologue of John's Gospel (1,14), and perhaps also in Rev 21,3.[43]

In their midst: Neither the rabbinic texts nor the NT presuppose a visible presence. In the rabbinic texts the *Shekhinah* is sometimes imagined as standing or hovering above the people.[44] Trilling compares this presence of Jesus "in their midst" to the *Shekhinah* in the Temple. He emphasizes its static nature and cultic connotations.[45] But Goldberg has shown that although the *Shekhinah* is sometimes connected with a place, e.g., the Temple, it is at other times associated with people or events regardless of location.[46]

Besides the similarities in wording, v 20 closely resembles *m Abot* 3:2b in structure too. Whereas Matt 18,15–19 contains a sequence of conditional sentences (*ean* plus aorist subjunctive is used 9 times), v 20 uses the indicative present. In contrast with v 15–19, it is not directed to a specific audience, but has the form of a general statement, with the dependent clause in the third person. This is apparently not a redactional development but is another indication that v 20 is—at least in part—based on a separate source.[47]

If, as our findings suggest, a Jewish saying underlies Matt 18,20, the concept of God's presence with two or three persons must have existed at least some time before the redaction of Matthew's gospel. Furthermore, if we can find a *terminus post quem* for the Jewish tradition, this applies to Matt 18,20 as well. In this regard,

however, our sources yield no precise data and we can only list the possibilities.

On one hand, it is possible that the concept of the *Shekhinah* with ten or less people existed already during the Second Temple period, although we have no verification for this.[48] In this case we have no way of dating the origin of Matt 18,20. There is, however, substantial agreement that its present formulation presupposes the Easter event.[49]

On the other hand, it has frequently been suggested that the broadened understanding of *Shekhinah* may be explained most plausibly as a response to the crisis caused by the destruction of the Temple: The *Shekhinah* is no longer in the Temple, but under certain conditions its presence can still be experienced, even by two or three people.[50] If this was so, Matt 18,20 attests to the continuing links between Matthew's source and rabbinic Judaism as it developed in Jamnia (Yabneh) after the destruction of the Temple. In this case it also reflects a continuing profound experience of the Lord's presence in the Christian community.[51]

V. CONCLUSION

The theme of God's presence among people runs through much of the rabbinic tradition as well as through the NT in general and the Gospel of Matthew in particular. Neither tradition denies that God can be with a single individual, but both attach special meaning to his presence with a group, however small it may be. The origins of the term *Shekhinah* lie in the Temple. Its adaptation to other situations has in part a liturgical basis (Ps 82). At least very soon after the destruction of the Temple it was felt that the *Shekhinah* was not bound to a particular place, that it could be found anywhere, not only in liturgical settings, if certain conditions were met. It seems that it is in this sense that Matthew's source adopted it. While common prayer is a principal occasion in which "two or three" can experience Jesus' presence, the only condition is that they are together in his name.

The rabbis call God's presence *Shekhinah*, a circumlocution that affirms his nearness without denying his otherness. The Christian recognizes this presence in (and through) Jesus. Can one compare

these two expressions without sounding blasphemous to the Jew and watered-down to the Christian? Can Jews and Christians meet "for the sake of Heaven", in the name of God, and in his presence?

On the Christian side the recent Vatican Guidelines for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate* encourage "a common meeting in the presence of God . . . in whatever circumstances as shall prove possible and mutually acceptable".[52] On the other hand, Martin Buber affirms that "where two or three are truly together, they are together in the name of God".[53] Ultimately, especially for Jews, the question is not only theological, but also historical. How can nineteen hundred years of separation, conflict, persecution, and indifference be overcome? Can Jews and Christians truly be together again?

Notes

1. E.g., Exod 25,8.9; 29,45; Num 5,3; Ps 74,2. For the pervasive theme of God's presence see S. Terrien, *The Elusive Presence. Toward a New Biblical Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978).
2. J. Heinemann [*Prayer in the Talmud* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1977) p. 273] considers the reference of the *Shekhinah* to be part of the oldest stratum of the prayer. This is possible, but his arguments are not convincing.
3. *Midrash Tehillim* 17, ed. S. Buber (Vilna: Romm, 1891) p. 127. English translation: W.G. Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms* (New Haven: Yale, 1959) I, p. 208. See P. Birnbaum, *Daily Prayer Book* (New York: Hebrew Publishing 1949) pp. 91–92. Concerning the Passover Haggadah see A.M. Goldberg, *Untersuchungen über die Vorstellung von der Schekhinah in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1969) p. 435.
4. See J. Maier, *Geschichte der jüdischen Religion* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1972) p. 134. E. Bickerman, "The Civic Prayer for Jerusalem", *HTR* 55 (1962) p. 164.
5. A. Diez Macho [*Neofiti I* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientifícas, 1970) vol. 2, p. 55*, n. 4] admits additions to Neofiti under the influence of Onkelos. See also A.M. Goldberg, "Die spezifische Verwendung des Terminus Schekhina im Targum Onkelos", *Judaica* 19 (1963) pp. 43–61.

6. 2 Macc 14,35. The parallel passage in 1 Macc 7,37–38 contains a different prayer. It is impossible to determine which one is more original. Both texts reflect the particular interests of the authors of the larger works: 1 Macc emphasizes defeat of Israel's enemies at the hands of the Hasmoneans, 2 Macc stresses the sanctity of the Temple. See Ezek 37,25 (LXX).
7. See Goldberg, *Untersuchungen,* p. 439.
8. *Untersuchungen,* p. 441.
9. *Ibid.,* pp. 440–442.
10. *Ibid.,* pp. 471–530, 457. See also 1 Kgs 8,12–13,27.
11. Perhaps of the fourth century: but B.Z. Wacholder ["The date of the Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael", *HUCA* 39 (1968) 142] dates it as late as the eighth century.
12. This is in reference to the priestly blessing (Num 6,24–26). The divine name contained in it three times was to be pronounced in the Temple, but *Adonai* was substituted for it in the synagogues (*mSotah* 7,6).
13. *Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael* (Bahodesh, Jethro Chap. 11), ed. & transl. by J.Z. Lauterbach (3 vols; Philadelphia: JPS 1933–35, repr. 1976), II, p. 287. A Christian parallel to the divine presence with one person is found in the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, 30. See B. Englezakis, "*Thomas,* Logion 30" *NTS* 25 (1979) pp. 262–265.
14. There are two Tannaim by this name. One flourished in the late first, the other in the mid-second century. See Goldberg, *Untersuchungen,* p. 387, but consult p. 501.
15. *Untersuchungen,* p. 500.
16. *Ibid.,* pp. 376–386.
17. *M Abot* 3,2b (3), 6. Concerning *mSanh.* 6,5 see Urbach, *The Sages,* p. 702, n. 17.
18. The entire passage is meant here: "Blessed is the man who . . . meditates on (*or* reads) his Torah day and night" (Ps 1,1–2).
19. *M Abot* 3,2b (3). Translation by J. Goldin, *The Living Talmud. The Wisdom of the Fathers* (New York: New American Library, 1957) pp. 120–121.
20. *BAbodah Zarah* 18a; also *Sifre Deut* 32,4, paragr. 307.
21. See below p. 176 Consult C.H. Dodd, *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester Univ., 3rd ed., 1967) p. 61.

22. *Abot de R. Natan B* 34, ed. Schechter, p. 74. English translation: A.J. Saldarini, *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan (Abot de Rabbi Nathan) Version B:A Translation and Commentary* (SJLA 11; Leiden: Brill, 1975).
23. *MAbot* 3,3 (6). See the requirement of common prayer when three men eat together (*mBer* 7,1). Both passages underscore the sacred character of every meal.
24. *MAbot* 3,6 (9). The prooftexts are the same as for the above quoted *Mekhilta* passage. The reference to Torah here fits the prooftexts less well than the reference to synagogue (for 10) and court (for 3) in the *Mekhilta*, which contains a more cohesive and probably more original tradition. See Goldberg, *Untersuchungen*, p. 387.
25. *BBer* 6a; *Lev Rab* 34:7 (A late Midrash, perhaps seventh-ninth century). See S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (new ed., New York: Schocken, 1961) pp. 125–126, 134–137.
26. I.M. Bunim, *Ethics from Sinai* (2nd ed.; New York: Feldheim, 1964) 1.235.
27. L. Finkelsten, in Schechter, *Aspects*, p. XX.
28. *B Sotah* 17a. Husband (Hebrew consonants *alef, yod, shin*) and wife (*alef, shin, he*) minus God (*yod, he*) equals fire (*alef, shin*). Urbach, *Sages*, p. 43. Contrast Goldberg, *Untersuchungen*, p. 419.
29. *Sifre Deut* 23,10, paragr. 254; Goldberg, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 142–160, esp. 147–148.
30. *Mekilta*, Bahodesh, Jethro, Chap. 9; Lauterbach II, p. 273.
31. G. Rossé, *Gesù in mezzo. Matteo 18,20 nell'esegesi contemporanea* (Rome, Città, Nuova, 1972) pp. 114, 137–138. J. Caba, *La oracion de peticion. Estudio exegetico sobre los evangelios sinópticos y los ecritos joaneos* (AnBib 62, Rome, Biblical Institute Press, 1974) pp. 199–200, 213–214.
32. W. Trilling, *Hausordnung Gottes. Eine Auslegung von Matthäus 18* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1960); id. *Das whare Israel Studien zur Theologie des Matthäusevangeliums* (Munich: Kösel, 3rd ed., 1964). W. Pesch, *Matthäus der Seelsorger. Das neue Verständnis der Evangelien dargestellt am Beispiel von Matthäus 18* (Stuttgart: KBW, 1966). W.G. Thompson, *Matthew's Advice to a Divided Community. Mt 17,22–18,35* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1970).

33. In addition to the works by G. Rossé and J. Caba there are J.M. Povilus, *La presenza di Gesù tra i suoi nella teologia di oggi* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1977) and, with particular emphasis on patristic exegesis, C. Lubich, "*Jesus in the Midst*" (New York: New City, 1976); see now also B. Engelzakis, "*Thomas*, Logion 30", *NTS* 25 (1979) pp. 262–272.
34. *JBL* 81 (1962) pp. 1–13.
35. M. Smith, *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels* (Philadelphia: SBL, 1951, reprint Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978) p. 152.
36. E.g., R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963) p. 142; C.H. Dodd, *New Testament Studies*, pp. 58–62; Trilling, *Das wahre Israel*, pp. 41–42. Contrast B.T. Viviano, *Study as Worship: Aboth and the New Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1978) p. 70. The only arguments adduced in favor of Matthean priority are (a) that Matthew predates all rabbinic authorities quoted with *Abot* 3,2b, 6 and (b) that the quorum required makes sense in Matt 18,20 (consult v 16b) but not in *Abot*. But (a) applies to many tannatic parallels to the gospels and does not take into account the disagreements in attribution and the anonymity of the *Mekhilta* tradition. (b) fails to recognize the rabbis' interpretation of scriptural prooftexts. B. Englezakis [*NTS* 25 (1979) p. 264] denies any connection between the origin of Matt 18,20 and the *Abot* sayings simply on the grounds that "they are later than Matthew".
37. Pap. Oxyrhynch. I^{r}. 2–3. See text and variant readings in Englezakis, *NTS* 25 (1979) p. 262, consult 266.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
39. Rossé, *Gesù in mezzo*, pp. 132–134; H. Frankemölle, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi* (NTAbh NF 10; Münster: Aschendorff, 1974) p. 35. Contrast Caba, *Oración*, p. 218. J.D.M. Derrett (" 'Where two or three are convened in my name . . .': a sad misunderstanding", *Exp Tim* 91 [December 1979] pp. 83–86) unduly narrows the meaning of Matt 28,20 to the settlement of disputes between church members.
40. E.g., H. Bietenhard, "Onoma", *TDNT* 5 (1967) pp. 274–276.
41. M. Smith, *Tannaitic Parallels*, p. 156.
42. W. Grundmann proposed this in a deplorable publication (*Christentum und Judentum*, Leipzig: Wigand, 1940, p. 76); more mod-

erate G. Bornkamm, "The Authority to 'Bind' and 'Loose' in the Church in Matthew's Gospel: The Problem of Sources in Matthew's Gospel", *Perspective* 11 (1970) p. 41.

43. See L. Bouyer, "La Shekinah: Dieu avec nous", *Bib Vie chr* 20 (1957) p. 19; R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII* (AB 29; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966) pp. 33–34. Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1912– pp. 80–81. Contrast Terrien, *Elusive Presence*, pp. 419–420. For the emphasis on divine presence in Matthew see 1,23; 10,40; 25,40–45; 28,20.
44. Goldberg, *Untersuchungen*, p. 448.
45. *Das wahre Israel*, p. 41.
46. *Untersuchungen*, pp. 388, 453–454; consult M. Kadushin [*The Rabbinic Mind* (3rd ed., New York: Bloch, 1972) p. 227] about "normal mysticism". See also Rossé, *Gesù in mezzo*, pp. 135–136.
47. Contrast Rossé, p. 146, but see p. 131 n. 151.
48. So Goldberg, *Untersuchungen*, p. 500.
49. R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, p. 149; Pesch, *Matthäus der Seelsorger*, p. 37; Caba, *Oración*, p. 218. See now, however, Englezakis, *NTS* 25 (1979) p. 263.
50. Goldberg, *Untersuchungen*, p. 443; Urbach, *Sages*, p. 43; A. Marmorstein, *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God* (London: Oxford Univ. P., 1927) p. 104.
51. One should compare here Luke 24, 13–35.
52. "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate*" by the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Reprinted in H. Croner (ed.), *Stepping Stones to Further Jewish-Christian Relations. An unabridged collection of Christian Documents* (London/New York: Stimulus Books, 1977) p. 12.
53. *Eclipse of God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1952) p. 9.

PART II

Liturgy and Life Cycles

The Jewish Liturgy of Marriage

Asher Finkel

INTRODUCTION

The Jewish liturgy of marriage must be viewed primarily in the light of biblical thought and the communal affective response, which reflect the axiological meaning,[1] that is to say, the intrinsic values, of a significant collective experience. Its phraseology not only incorporates the scriptural words, but reveals clearly the interpretative dynamics of the nuptial covenant (Berith). The blessings are addressed to God, the creator and sustainer of the historical human community, which enjoys its continued existence through the union of male and female members. The "Bridegrooms' Benediction" (Birkat Hatanim) also conveys the meaning of the joy of this experience. What is shared by those assembled with the couple is "covenant love" (hesed). As such, the Benedictions address the bride and groom, in whose union the expression of *agapē* or altruistic love is manifested and desired. The marriage liturgy becomes both the communal response to the reality of God's presence and the accepting of God's way (Deut. 11:22; Sifre). On the one hand, the biblically-oriented group celebrates marriage with an historical awareness of a covenantal relationship to God, while on the other, it behaves in accordance with an ethical system governed by a deep sense of "imitatio Dei". It is necessary then to focus on these two religious forces, beginning with the prophetic tradition concerning God's covenant.

COVENANT AND MATRIMONIAL SYMBOLISM

Prophetic speech utilizes matrimonial symbolism[2] to express anthropopathically the dynamic relationship between God and Israel, for the prophet's personality is deeply affected by the divine pathos.[3] By projection, even his private experience in the human realm reflects the dimension of transpersonal relationship.[4] Prophetic words, therefore, capture dramatically the event or situation in its experiential setting.[5] When they were first spoken and later liturgically recited, they came to awaken and to stir the people to an affective understanding of the divine message. The community is asked to enter the word, to feel its cutting edge and to be shaken by its revealing power.[6] Thus, the prophet addresses the dynamic word (*debhar* = *logos*) of God and the people are stimulated to an affective knowledge (*da'at*) of God. For *da'at* in Hebrew connotes more than the possession of abstract concepts; it is used also to depict a sexual union (Gen. 4:1). The *knowledge of God*[7] compasses inner appropriation, involving both the intellectual reception and the emotional response. It evokes deep feelings and affects the whole human personality. The prophets offer dramatic words which provide for the hearers a sense of intimacy with God, namely: to be in his presence and to be touched by divine love. No wonder the prophets view the historical relationship between God and his people in marital terms.

The prophetic conception of covenantal history is expressed and understood not as living under a suzerain treaty[8] but as experiencing a marital relationship. It recalls affectionately the period of Israel's first encounter with God in the wilderness following the exodus (Jer. 2:1; Ezek. 16:8). This time was filled with deep theocentric meaning and has shaped the historiographic, ritualistic and legislative character of biblical faith. To the prophets the formative events of the exodus represent the essential forms for authentic relationship to God.[9] The crossing of the Reed Sea followed by the Sinai event were occasions for the collective person to encounter the presence of God in an act of freedom and through the experience of *mysterium tremendum et fascinans,* as explained by R. Otto.[10]

A couple's initial encounter in marriage, a human experiential setting, is used by the prophet to present dramatically the free act of mutual acceptance,[11] a union in joy and intimate concern for the

other. God's covenant is expressed through a form of nuptial vow:[12] "Ye shall be unto me a people and I shall be unto you a God." Such a vow bound the parties to each other "from this day on and forever", expressing their commitments and responsibilities in a marriage covenant. This nuptial form[13] affects the deuteronomic understanding of the relationship between God and Israel (Deut. 26:17–19). Redactionally it is juxtaposed to both the pilgrim's annual confession before God (Deut. 26:5–11, 13–15) and the covenantal pronouncement of curses and blessings (Deut. 27). Thus the liturgical *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history) and the apodictic *Gottesgesetz* (divine law), two distinct Israelite forms, are dramatically linked with a prophetic view that the God-Israel encounter and "amen" commitments are respectively the cause and effect of a marital vow. Moreover, this consciousness moves the prophet to dramatize the future act of betrothal covenant between God and Israel. The renewal covenant will be sealed perpetually in justice and righteousness, in love and faithfulness. Only then is the *da'at* of God effective, resulting in the mutual declaration of the nuptial vow: "You are my people" and "You are my God" (Hos. 2:21–22, 25).

In prophetic thought the eschatological time of covenant renewal corresponds to the historical time of the initial encounter between God and his people. The dynamic religious history of Israel between these two temporal poles, then, reflects the true dialectic of the covenant. It is an interplay of closeness and distance, of excitement and weariness, of *da'at* and unfaithfulness. The human estrangement from God is portrayed in terms of adultery and separation, resulting in divorce or widowhood.[14] The prophetic use of matrimonial symbolism appeals to an immediate religious and moral regeneration (the call for repentance). It links affectively the remembered past with the prospect of renewal in the future (the new covenant).[15]

THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

The hierogamic (sacred marriage) understanding of the transpersonal relationship in prophetic thought clearly indicates a sacramental meaning of the interpersonal union. The covenant (*berith*) of marriage is compared with the holy (*qodesh*) of God. As the holy is subject to desecration, so is the covenant when it is broken by taking

another woman (Mal. 2:11). The act of divorce is called human betrayal "to your companion and to your wife of the covenant". Since God is witness to the union, divorce is hateful to God (Mal. 2:14–16). Malachi's teaching on marriage that "has he (God) not made it one?" reflects the paradigmatic lesson of Adam and Eve becoming one flesh (Gen. 2:24). This prophetic understanding clearly underlies the teaching of Jesus. "They are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mk. 10:8, 9; Matt. 19:5, 6).

In the Christian church, the human bond is sanctioned as a covenant by God's intent for the created human order. The Markan tradition sees marriage as an indissoluble bond between two persons. It therefore presents the above lesson in juxtaposition to Jesus' saying on the prohibition of divorce[16] as a separate instruction to the disciples (Mk. 10: 10–12). Such is also the proscription of Jesus transmitted by Paul (I Cor. 7:10, 11). However, the Matthean tradition suggests that although divorce is not desired, it can be granted in case of adultery (Matt. 19:9; 5:32). Apparently the debate with the Pharisees[17] on the issue of divorce indicates that the Mosaic allowance (Deut. 24:1) was given, according to Jesus, to those with "hardness of heart" (Mk. 10:5; Matt. 19:8). Divorce comes only to terminate a human condition plagued with unresolved harsh feelings; the persons are released from a prolonged state of interpersonal enmity and persistent friction. In Matthean thought, the aggravated situation remains unresolved when there is an act of marital betrayal and divorce can be issued, for Christian life is principally marked by altruistic love in the interpersonal relationship (Mk. 12:31; Matt. 7:12 = Lk. 6:27–31; Jn. 13:34, 35 and Gal. 5:14). Marriage itself is a microcosm of covenantal life and as such must enjoy the fulness of the love commandment.

This Matthean understanding is shared by the rabbis. Although the Pharisaic schools have established grounds for divorce (Mishnah Gittin 9:10), Rabbi Yochanan of the third century taught that such an act is abhorred by God (B. Talmud Gittin 90b). In the view of Rabbi Akiba[18] of the second century, an incompatible marriage produces a situation of hatred in which the couple transgresses the biblical interpersonal injunctions forbidding vengeance, grudges and hatred, and commanding love of one's neighbor (Lev. 19:17, 18).

For this reason, Rabbi Akiba even permits divorce in case the husband is beset with thoughts of a prettier woman.[19]

In the rabbinic view, betrothal[20] was not a mere private agreement on the transference of legal ownership of the woman from her father to the husband, but above all a sarcamental act (*qiddushin*). Betrothal is to be witnessed by the community, which is sanctified through the fulfilment of God's commandments. This public act comes to restrict sexual union to the couple (the biblical law of holiness), thereby legitimatizing the children. Thus, a blessing of sanctification is pronounced over the sacramental wine prior to the symbolic act of betrothal, the placing of the ring.

> "Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us by his commandments and proscribed us illicit unions (Lev. 18), who hast forbidden unto us the betrothed but permitted us those who are wedded through the nuptial canopy and the sacramental act of betrothal. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast sanctified his people, Israel, through the nuptial canopy and the sacramental act of betrothal."

The betrothal event only symbolically ties the bond in anticipation of the wedding ceremony under the bridgroom's canopy and the actual union. In the biblical past these two events were separated in time and the former was solemnized by the public act of witness and the reading of the marriage contract. Both these acts reflect the couple's mutual agreement, which is acknowledged by the community and enforced "in accordance with the law of Moses and Israel". Such a sanctified bond in rabbinic thought allows the new social unit of two persons to enjoy God's presence. Rabbi Akiba taught: "When man and woman are privileged (with good marriage), God's presence (*Shekhinah*) is between them. Otherwise fire will consume them" (B. Talmud Soṭah 17a). His disciple Rabbi Meir[21] explains that a union of *'ysh* (man) and *ishah* (woman), living in accordance with God's ways and commandments, is blessed by the presence of God's name, *Yah,* that is to say, the *y* of *ysh* and *h* of *ishah*. Otherwise, God's name is removed from the two and they become fire *'esh*, consuming each other in conflict and hatred. In their view, marriage parallels the

relationship between God and the historical community. The biblical tradition speaks of the experience of God's presence and his withdrawal as it relates dynamically to a life governed either by the rule of altruistic love and righteousness or by egotism and violence.[22]

HIEROGAMIC INTERPRETATION AND MESSIANIC SYMBOLISM

The prophetic hierogamic view of covenantal history has influenced the rabbinic allegorical interpretation (Midrash). Israel is depicted as the bride and the Torah as the marriage contract (gamikon).[23] The nuptial period is compared with Sinaitic times and the Tabernacle (Temple) is considered the groom's canopy.[24] The prophets represent the friends of the groom and the bridegroom-Messiah is dressed with the garments of salvation.[25] The homiletic tradition[26] even preserves a hymn addressed to the groom-Messiah:

> "Blessed is the time when the Messiah was
> conceived (literally created).
> Blessed is the womb from which he came (cf.
> Lk. 11:27).
> Blessed is the generation, that its eyes can see.
> Blessed is the eye that is privileged to see him
> (cf. Lk. 10:23).
> For the greeting of his lips is blessing and peace;
> his talk soothing to the soul;
> his attire reflects majesty and glory.
> His speech conveys assurance and serenity;
> his tongue offers remission of sins and forgiveness;
> his prayer is a pleasing scent;
> his supplication bespeaks holiness;
> and there is purity in his teachings."

Such nuptial hymns (*shir yediduth*) are presented in the Psalms (45, 2, 72), which were interpreted christologically (cf. Targum and Midrash with Justin's Dialogue). These poetic forms derive from the setting of the wedding at which the bridegroom was greeted with song and verse. In light of this, the liturgical use of the biblical Canticles promoted an allegorical interpretation among the early

Tannaites.[27] The nuptial drama of the lover-king and his bride captures affectively the covenantal dynamics of the transpersonal relationship between God and Israel (see Targum, Midrash Rabba and Zuṭa to Canticles).

This rabbinic hermeneutical understanding, which indeed relates to the mystical language of transpersonal experience, was shared by the Church fathers, appearing already in the works of Origen. More significant, however, is the rabbinic background which provides meaning to messianic symbolism as found in the early Christian tradition. The forerunner prophet John is the friend of the groom and Jesus is the bridegroom (Jn. 3:29). The coalescence of God the groom (Isa. 62:5) with Jesus the messiah-groom determines the anthropopathic meaning of Christology. This shows how deeply the affective understanding of the covenant prevailed in the early Church (Eph. 5:25–32) for such was the tradition attributed to Jesus on self-designation (so Mk. 2:19, pp.). In addition, the future advent of the Messiah is depicted with matrimonial symbolism (Matt. 25:1–13). Thus, Christians and Jews share similar interpretative dynamics of the mystical and sacramental aspects of the covenant.

HESED: COVENANT-LOVE

The correspondence between the transpersonal and interpersonal relationships in biblical thought affects also the axiological significance of the marital covenant. The type of love expressed in a covenantal union, which determines attitude and behavior, is called *ḥesed*. It is manifested in a persistent, steadfast, loyal and faithful concern for the other (*eleos*), as it flows from the deep sense of *agapē* (altruistic love). On the transpersonal level, it shapes the attitude and behavior of the *ḥasid*,[28] i.e. pious dutifulness, humble devotion and *pietas*. On the interpersonal level, it is expressed in non-reciprocal actions, which are rendered in respectful consideration for the other. Loving deeds (*gemilut ḥesed*) are greater than mere almsgiving (*ṣedaqah*), since they involve the whole person in giving.[29]

God himself serves as the supreme example in the expression of covenant love (*ḥesed*).[30] The pentateuchal tradition not only narrates his acts in a *Heilsgeschichte* of mankind,[31] but suggests to the worshipping community socio-ethical guidelines in the "imitatio Dei".[32]

The canonical texts as read and experienced by the faithful offer archetypal examples for all generations of God's people.[33] For the Targumist,[34] the way of God in particular biblical events reflects affectively the ethical prescription of loving deeds for the liturgical community. The Palestinian Targum to Gen. 35:9 (Codex Neofiti) begins: "God of the universe, may his name be blessed forever and ever", the liturgical address. It continues:

> "You taught us fine commandments and beautiful statutes. You taught us the nuptial blessings from the case of Adam and his mate, as it is explicitly written: (Gen. 1:28) 'The *Memra* (Logos in Targum) of God blessed them and he said to them: Multiply, increase and fill the earth.' "

The liturgy of marriage is clearly associated with the communal participation in the act of covenant love. The biblical story of the archetypal union between Adam and Eve is used in the Midrash (Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer 12; Gen. Rabba to Gen. 1:28) to underscore the significant lesson of "imitatio Dei". It projects the meaning of the marriage ceremony as the expression of communal *ḥesed*. The midrash relates that God has constructed ten canopies for Adam the bridegroom (referring to Ezek. 28:13f) with the angels as the merry-making escort. "God said to the ministering angels: Let us perform the act of *ḥesed* on behalf of Adam and his mate, for loving deeds sustain the world (referring to Mishnah Abot 1:2)." Such acts were indeed performed in Jerusalem during the Second Temple period by the inhabitants, who would gather on the steps of the Ḥuldah gate of the Temple (recently uncovered) to welcome the bridegroom (Soferim 19:9). The Midrash, therefore, interpretatively maintains that the communal participation in the nuptial rite transcends the liminal meaning of passage.[35]

Each stage of the wedding celebration[36] involves a public demonstration and preparation of the bride. It follows with a bridal procession, when respected members of the community escort and lead the bride into the groom's canopy. Under the canopy, a structure or room especially prepared for the newlyweds, the nuptial blessings are recited. The celebration ends with a communal wedding feast, for the dramatic expression of *Berith* (covenant) was translated into

partaking of a common meal (the meaning of Hebrew *barah*). The marriage event was experienced in a collective setting, the basic socio-religious unit of at least ten persons being required (B. Talmud Kettubah 7b; 8b). Indeed the occasion offered an opportunity for the entire community to participate in the act of *ḥesed,* for the collective expression of covenant love came to support and deepen the agapic meaning of the marital union for the individuals. At the wedding banquet the gathering responded to the bride and groom as a royal couple, whose presence implied the dignity and majesty first bestowed by God upon the human couple. Each union in a biblically oriented community shares in the intended purpose of human existence. This understanding is expressed through the nuptial blessings that were recited, not only on the first day, but throughout the week of festivities. During this period, the symbolic seven days of creation, hospitality was extended to guests, friends and relatives. In the company of the groom and bride they enjoyed the elated feeling of togetherness and friendship with a joyous spirit of *shalom* (peace and wholeness). They shared in this expression through song, verse and music, conveying a sense of God's blessing.

PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCE AND THE LAMENT FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

The week of joyous table fellowship celebrates the critical liminal period in a human life cycle, the time of marriage following puberty. Phenomenologically it corresponds to the week of joyous pilgrim fellowship at a sacrificial meal. The latter celebrates the liminal period in nature's seasonal cycle. The biblical week of pilgrimage, however, was devoid of the mythopoeic dramatization of the primordial event determining the cosmic order.[37] It was instead generated with the religio-historical meaning of the formative event affecting human redemption. During the feast of collective *anamnesis* (i.e. *remembrance* as at e.g. Passover), the pilgrims shared in the experiential response (e.g. the Narration and the evocative food symbols) of the original community to God's presence (the time of the exodus). The week of pilgrimage in Zion, then, becomes the socio-religious occasion for a communal experience of covenant love.

This coalescence of the present community with its historical

beginnings functions similarly in the dramatic linkage of the individual couple with the original pair. This dynamic liturgical complex affects the meaning of the anticipated messianic future. The eschatological teachings draw upon both matrimonial and pilgrimage symbolism. The wedding feast and the sacrificial peace-meal of pilgrims prefigure the messianic banquet at the end of time. The septennial period of celebration projects the temporal duration of salvific history.[38] It also corresponds to the liturgical cycle of sabbatical years. Thus, the parable of Jesus depicting the heavenly kingdom as a wedding feast (Matt. 22:1–14) is determined by the experiential setting of marriage. Even the attitude of the guests expressed with proper wedding attire receives special attention. The sacrificial meaning of Jesus' messianic life is developed from the Passover symbolism of the pilgrimage celebration.

The Jewish eschatological tradition, as reflected in the daily petitions,[39] first depicts the redemption of Israel through the ingathering of the exiles in the historical future. The marriage event, therefore, was affected by the present situation of exilic life, for the covenantal union not only captured the ideal meaning of the archetypal past but also held the redemptive prospect for the future. In the present the historical Israel remains unredeemed, its Temple destroyed and Judea desolated. Following the destruction of the Temple, the joy experience was provided by the marriage event, for pilgrimage was not possible. The occasion for celebration became subdued by the exilic experience of lament for the Temple.

The wedding ceremony was dramatically changed by the significant elimination of the royal attire of the groom and bride, the musical accompaniment and the bridal procession.[40] The exilic reality had a parallel effect on the marriage liturgy, echoing the prospect for eschatological redemption. For the marriage event, through participation at the meal and the recital of blessings, affectively moved the community from the present anguished reality to the anticipated joy open to a future generation. Such a prospect is made possible through the present marital union. Thus, the antiphonal invitation to the blessings after the meal reveals that the group enjoys the marriage event as a joyous sharing in God's presence. They bless God "in whose abode is joy" (B. Talmud Ketubot 8a). The reference

to God's abode (*Ma'on*) suggests the apocalyptic correspondence with the heavenly realm, where the angelic *familia* celebrates with hymns of joy (B. Talmud Hagigah 12b). Accordingly, the vocal participation in joyous response at the wedding meal is perceived as a Eucharistic service (*Todah*) of the Temple, which promotes the restoration of Jerusalem (B. Talmud Berakhot 8b).

THE MARRIAGE LITURGY

The marriage liturgy is transmitted by the Babylonian academy of the third century (R. Yehudah of Pumbeditha; Talmud Ketuboth 8b). It preserves two distinct parts, each consisting of three benedictions.[41] The first part links the event of marriage with the purpose of creation. The biblically-oriented community witnesses to God, the creator of the universe. In God's presence the human couple solemnize their union as the realization of the divine intention. Their bond dramatizes the original union of Adam and Eve. The blessings are recited over the cup of wine, signifying a sacramental act. They are pronounced in the company of at least ten men, the basic ecclesiastical unit.[42] The blessings are offered in praise of God, the source of all blessings for the worshipping community.

The first benediction reads: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has created everything to his glory." This reflects the prophetic teaching: ". . . everything that is called by my name; it is for my glory I have created it" (Isa. 43:7).[43]

The second benediction reads: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, the creator of the human being (the *Adam*)." This is a praise response of a witnessing community to an event of God's creative purpose. A similarly-worded praise response ("the creator of the cosmos") is uttered upon seeing the earth's created forms (mountains, seas and deserts) and the heavenly manifestations (the comets and the sun at the beginning of the great cycle of 28 years).[44]

The third benediction reads: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast created Adam in his image, after the likeness of his prototype (*tabhnit*), and hast prepared unto him, out of his very self, a perpetual fabric (i.e. Eve). Blessed art

thou, O Lord, creator of humankind (the *Adam*)".[45] These words allude to the creation story of Adam and Eve. The present human couple share in the divine pattern of creation.

The second part of the marriage liturgy addresses the couple which shares the joy of covenantal experience with the historical community. First the present exilic situation affects the joyous experience, which gives rise to an expression of hope for the return to Zion (the recalled site of pilgrimage). The benediction reads: "Let the barren (Zion) be exceeding glad and exult upon the ingathering of her children within her in joy. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who makest Zion to rejoice with her children."[46] These words allude to the prophetic matrimonial imagery and eschatology (Isa. 54:1, 6 and 35:10). It captures also the present state of aloneness in exile, the experience of lament for Zion (compare the collective lament of Psalm 137:5). Thus the fate of Jerusalem is dramatically recalled in time of joy.[47]

The second benediction focuses on the covenant love experienced by the assembly in the presence of the loving couple. It receives axiological meaning from God's archetypal act of *ḥesed*. "O make these loved companions greatly to rejoice, as thou originally madest thy creation rejoice in the garden of Eden. Blessed art thou who makest groom and bride to rejoice". These words address God as "thou", whose presence affects "imitatio" in his creatures.

The third benediction becomes the cry for immanent (meherah)[48] redemption, when joy of harmony and peaceful togetherness is experienced at marriage. This proleptic eschatology is expressed as the final prayer under the groom's canopy and at the wedding feast. "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast created joy and gladness, groom and bride, mirth and exultation, love and brotherhood, peace and fellowship. Soon, O Lord our God, let there be heard in the towns of Judea and in the squares of Jerusalem the voice of joy and gladness, the voice of groom and bride;[49] (like the) jubilant sound of grooms from their canopies and of youths from the banquet of song. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who makest the groom rejoice with the bride". The eschatological promise eschoes the words of Jer. 33:10, 11 and it is sandwiched between the feelings evoked at the wedding ceremony and its experiential setting (the canopy and the banquet). As blessing for the couple, custom prevailed that it offers the opportunity for spontaneous personal prayer for the groom and bride.[50]

The first part of the marriage liturgy is symmetrical to the second part in the repetition of the benedictory conclusion. The former refers to the creation of mankind and the latter to the joy of the couple. The former stresses coalescence with the archetypal event of the beginning. The human acknowledgement of creation attests to God's glory. The latter focuses on the eschatological prospect for the historical community. This reflects corporate consciousness for the male and female members, whose joy in union is linked affectively with the joyous prospect for the children of Zion. Thus, these two parts come to bridge the past with the future in the covenantal event of the present.

Notes

1. On the relationship of the axiological meaning to the religious experience of the worshippers, see M. Kadushin, *Worship and Ethics*, New York, Bloch, 1963.
2. Refer to A. Neher, *The Prophetic Existence*, London, Yoseloff, 1969.
3. See A Heschel, *The Prophets*, New York, Harper & Row, I, 1969; II, 1971.
4. So the marriage of Hosea (1–3) and the death of Ezekiel's wife (24:15–27). Transpersonal relationship is the relationship between the persons (individual or collective) and God, whereas the interpersonal represents the relationship between human persons.
5. So the use of the "lawsuit" (ribh) form by the prophets. It places the hearers in a court setting, where the past is reviewed and the future is decided. This phenomenological approach can explain the parabolic speech of the prophet as effective psychodramatic words.
6. The prophet speaks the word he carries as a sharp sword (Isa. 49:2) or the sound of a ram's horn (Isa. 58:1). It is a penetrating word, which comes to disturb the people. The bearer, therefore, faces persecution, as is the case with Jeremiah.
7. See A. Heschel, *The Prophets*, I, pp. 57–60 and the Hebrew *Encyclopedia Biblica*, II, pp. 697–700.
8. So G.E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient*

Near East, Pittsburgh, 1955. Consult the review by D.J. McCarthy, *Old Testament Covenant,* Atlanta, Knox Press, 1972.

9. See S. Terrien, *The Elusive Presence,* New York, Harper, 1978, ch. 3 and E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament,* New York, Harper, 1958, p. 190 on the eschatological correspondence.
10. *The Idea of the Holy,* Oxford U.P. 1958. See R. Davidson, *R. Otto's Interpretation of Religion,* Princeton, 1947.
11. Even though in biblical times marriage was arranged between the parents, Ezekiel's depiction of covenantal history (ch. 16) refers to Israel as an abandoned child, who enters into nuptial ties on her own. At this first encounter God takes the initiative. Subsequently, the person must seek the covenantal relationship with God, paradigmatically depicting proselytes (B. Talmud Qiddushin 70b).
12. Such nuptial vows are employed in prophetic writings (Hos. 2:25; Zech. 8:8; Ezek. 11:20; 14:10; 13:24; 36:28; 37:23, 27; Jer. 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 32:30). Refer to the marriage contract of the Elephantine papyri (Kraeling 7, 440 B.C.E.) and that of Babatha (Yadin, Bar Kochba, 128 C.E.). This form was preserved over the centuries.
13. The nuptial vow is introduced with the verb *'amar.* Palestinian Targum I relates the meaning to the Arabic *ḥatab,* a love declaration (so B. Talmud Berakhoth 6a). Palestinian Targum II (Neofiti), however, relates it to the Arabic *emir,* act of coronation. The Hebrew appears to reflect the meaning of oath-taking (so B. Talmud Giṭṭin 57b).
14. From Hosea's vision and on, the reference to adultery appears and separation is indicated in Isa. 54:6. Divorce is portrayed in Hos. 2:4; Jer. 3:1 and widowhood in Lam. 1:1.
15. So Ezek. 37:27 and Jer. 32:30. Thus Ezek. 36:28; Jer. 31:32 refer to the new covenant as the purifactory event of a changed personality. The reception of a new human heart is understood apocalyptically as the removal of the evil inclination from human nature.
16. Cf. the comparative study with Rabbinic law and Essene texts, so D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism,* London, 1956; J.D.M. Derrett, *Law in the New Testament,* London,

1970 and the earlier work of I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, reprinted New York, Ktav, 1967.

17. On the debate see R. Banks, *Jesus and the Law in Synoptic Tradition*, Cambridge, 1975. The classical text is Mishnah Giṭṭin 9:10; see A. Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth*, Leiden, Brill, 1974, on the Shammaites and Hillelites.
18. Abot de R. Nathan, ed. S. Schechter, I, p. 83. Compare Tosefta Sotah 5:11 in the name of R. Meir, the disciple of R. Akiba.
19. See *Tosephta Kipheshutah*, ed. S. Lieberman, VIII, p. 663.
20. Cf. D.M. Feldman, *Marital Relations, Birth Control and Abortion in Jewish Law*, New York, Schocken, 1968; Louis M. Epstein, *Sex Laws and Customs in Judaism*, New York, Bloch, 1948. Compare B. Schereschewsky, *Family Law*, Jerusalem, Mass, 1958.
21. See Leqaḥ Tobh on Genesis, ed. Buber, p. 23 and compare Pirke de R. Eliezer 12 and Midrash Hagadol to Gen. 2:23.
22. Consult my forthcoming monograph on *God's Presence and His Absence*, South Orange, Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies, 1981.
23. The Midrash lists the ten biblical references to Israel as bridge; Pesiqta de R. Kahana, *Sos 'Asis*. Torah as marriage contract is found in a parable, Exodus Rabba to 34:27.
24. See Mishnah Ta'anit 4:8 and Pesiqta de R. Kahana.
25. See Echa Rabba to Lam. 1:1; Yalqut Simeoni to Jer. 2:1 and Pesiqta Rabbati 37.
26. See Pesiqta de R. Kahana, ed. Mandelbaum II, Additions, *Sos 'Asis*, p. 470.
27. Cf. M.H. Pope's Introduction to *Song of Songs*, Anchor Bible, Garden City, Doubleday, 1977.
28. Cf. A. Büchler, *Types of Jewish Palestinian Piety*, reprinted New York, Ktav, 1968 and G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, New York, Macmillan, 1973, part 1, 3.
29. So Palestinian Talmud Pe'ah 1:1; see G.F. Moore, *Judaism*, II, Cambridge, Harvard, 1950, part 5, 7.
30. So defined by Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament*, New York, Schocken, 1964, ch. 5.
31. So G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, *The Book of the Acts of God*, Garden City, Doubleday, 1960.

32. See S. Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology,* New York, Schocken, 1961, pp. 119ff; M. Waxman, *Judaism: Religion and Ethics,* London, Yosseloff, 1953, pp. 227–232.
33. So is the hermeneutical understanding in the Book of Jubilees and Pirqe de R. Eliezer. This is also reflected in the Aggadic principle of "works of the Patriarchs are signs to the descendants".
34. Compare the quoted text with Palestinian Targum to Deut. 34:6, which offers also the example of matchmaking (see also B. Talmud 'Abodah Zarah 3b. Compare the homiletic lesson in B. Talmud Soṭah 14a and Sabbath 133b. This liturgical understanding refers to the seven corporal acts of mercy (cf. Matt. 25:35–40 with Isa. 58:6, 7).
35. On the liminal meaning see Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage,* Chicago, University Press, 1960; Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process,* Ithaca, N.Y.; Cornell U., 1977.
36. Cf. *The Jewish People in the First Century,* II ed. Safrai and Stern, Compendium Rerum Iudaicarum, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1976, pp. 752–760.
37. Compare M. Eliade, *Cosmos and History,* New York, Harper, 1959. See E.O. James, *Seasonal Feasts,* New York, Barnes and Noble, 1961.
38. So B. Talmud Sanhedrin 99a, referring to Isa. 62:5. On the sabbatical setting for messianic movement, see B.Z. Wachholder, "Sabbatical" in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,* Supplementary Volume, Nashville, Abingdon, 1976.
39. See Kaufmann Kohler, "The Origin and Composition of the Eighteen Benedictions" in *Contributions to the Scientific Study of Jewish Liturgy,* ed. Petuchowski, New York, Ktav, 1970.
40. See Mishnah Sotah 9:14 and Tosefta 15:7, 12–15.
41. There was a difference in the liturgical use of the two parts. In Palestine only three benedictions were recited; see *'Osar Hageonim,* ed. B.M. Levin, VIII: Ketuboth, pp. 28, 91.
42. So B. Talmud Ketuboth 7b, referring to *Ecclesia* (Ps. 68:27) and compare B. Talmud Berakhot 21b on the ecclesiastical quorum.
43. Compare the final paragraph in Pereq Qinyan and Abot de R. Nathan.
44. See Mishnah Berakhot 9:2 and B. Talmud 59b.

45. The Adam refers both to the singular human type (Gen. 3:22) or the collective (Gen. 6:1).
46. Another recension reads "in the building of Jerusalem". This dual reading of *Baneha-Binyanah* reflects a similar dual reading in Matt. 11:19, "in her deeds" and Lk. 7:35: "by all her children".
47. Such became the custom of breaking a dish under the canopy; see further *Encyclopedia Talmudit*, XII, ed. Zevin, entry: *Zekher Lahurban*.
48. The use of the interjection *maher* in prayer may explain the rendition *epiousios* for *mahar* (tomorrow) in the Our Father.
49. This link with the prophetic text offers the experiential interpretation of Jeremiah's promise. On the Blessings, see *Encyclopedia Talmudit*, ed. Zevin, IV: *Birkat Hatanim*.
50. See *Abodat Israel*, ed. I. Baer, Redelsheim, 1918, p. 565; offering a poem of the Roman liturgy.

Judaism and the Christian Liturgy of Marriage: Similarities and Differences

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Some Fundamental Points

When speaking of the Christian liturgy of marriage a distinction must be made, from the fourth century on, between liturgies of the East and of the West. The distinction is extremely important because, where marriage is concerned, there is question, not only of different rites, but of differing attitudes.

As far back as the fourth century it seems there was a special liturgy of the sacrament of marriage in the Eastern Church which was related to the Old Testament. It is not surprizing, then, that this betrothal and marriage liturgy should be closely allied to the Jewish celebration.

In the West, with the exception of the blessing of the bride which is not a sacrament properly so called, we find no specific liturgy of marriage before the end of the eleventh century. The ceremony was modelled on current customs, especially in Rome, as long as these customs were not contrary to Christian faith or practice. The Epistle to Diognetus is clear about this, stating as it does that Christians get married as others do.[1] Christian marriage in the Western Church took on legal connotations, consent being indicated, according to the custom of different cultures, by the payment of money, the giving of a ring and, in Gaul for example, by the blessing of the

nuptial chamber. When marriage came to be celebrated in the presence of the Church's minister, *in facie Ecclesiae*[2], the "pagan" Roman ritual of betrothal and that of marriage coalesced. Still today, although improved somewhat through a rich choice of readings, Christian marriage remains very juridical in the very liturgy of the sacrament, without there being sufficient emphasis on the theology of marriage and the covenant which the bride and groom symbolize.[3]

I. LINKS WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT

The blessing of the bride as mentioned in the sacramentary of Verona[4] clearly shows links with the blessing formula with which Raguel gave his daughter Sarah in marriage to Tobias (Tob. Vulg. 8:5). It could be said that all the Christian marriage rituals have been inspired by this blessing. We do not find in the Old Testament any mention of the presence of priests at the celebration which took place at the home of the groom, or, occasionally, at that of the bride (Gen. 29:21–24; Jug. 14:12; Tob. Vulg. 8:23).[5] This corresponds with what we see, at least in the Churches of the West and in Gaul in particular, where evidence is first found of the custom of "the nights of Tobias" being observed in Christian marriages (Tob. Vulg. 6:16; 8:4).[6] Ritzer, attempting to reconstruct the blessing of the bride as found in the sacramentary of Verona, stresses these references in his text. The following are some fragments of interest to our topic:

> Father, you called into being all that exists (Gen. 1:24), giving man the mission to multiply (Gen. 1:28; 9:1–7). With your own hands you created a companion for Adam so that the bone taken from his bones might have the same form despite the admirable difference of the sexes (Gen. 2:18–24). Thus your command to share the nuptial bed, to increase and multiply in such large numbers, has created bonds in the human race in order to link together the inhabitants of the whole earth (Gen. 1:28; 9:1–7) . . . the weaker sex united to the stronger forming together one whole (cf. Gen. 1:24) . . . Graciously bless the youthful strength of this your servant who is marrying so that, sharing a good

> and holy life with her husband, she may keep the precepts of eternal law (cf. Eccl. 17:9ff); may she remember that she is not primarily called to enjoy what marriage allows but rather be lovingly concerned about conjugal fidelity (Tob. Vulg. 6:22; 8:9).

"The biblical and theological content of this prayer is, unfortunately", as Ritzer notes, "so hidden in the rhetoric of the past as to be unrecognizable."

In the ritual that was drawn up according to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the readings from the Old Testament are well chosen, bringing a new point of view which we shall look at briefly later.

In addition to the nuptial blessing, the texts of the Mass are dependent on the Old Testament. In the Sacramentary of Verona, for example, the second prayer at the beginning of the Mass expresses it concisely: . . . *et cuius creator es operis, esto dispositor* (and you who are the creator of this work be its dispenser); in the introduction to the blessing of the bride: . . . *et instituis tuis quibus propagationem humani generis ordinasti* (and you who by your work have ordered the propagation of the human race); as well as the beginning of this blessing quoted above: *Pater, mundi conditor, multiplicandae originis institutor, qui Adae comitem tuis manibus addisti, cuius ex ossibus ossa crescentia parem formam admirabili diversitate signarent*[8] (Father, creator of the world, author of all which has being, who gave Adam a companion made by your hands, so that the bone taken from his bones might grow into a like form with an admirable diversity). The allusions to Genesis are obvious.

The Gelasian sacramentary has a preface whose authentic text has been included in the marriage ritual of Vatican II. The doctrine expressed therein is clearly biblical with a rich theology showing a sound view of marriage: . . . *ut multiplicandis adoptivorum filiis sanctorum concubiorum fecunditas pudica serviret* (that a chaste fecundity may serve to multiply the sons of adoption). In spite of the christianizing of the text which speaks of the 'adopted children of God' the profound meaning of marriage is developed according to the tradition of the book of Genesis.[9]

II. POINTS OF CONTACT WITH THE LITURGY OF RABBINIC JUDAISM

Here we shall very briefly sum up a few points which concern the links between the Christian and Jewish liturgies of marriage. We merely want to mention some customs: gifts of *money,* a *document* which recognizes the contract of the union, assimilating the ceremony of betrothal to that of marriage itself, the role of the *crown,* the custom of the *Huppah* and the *glass of wine.*

Although the text of *Mishnah Qiddushin*[10] states that a woman may be married through a gift of money, through a written document or by *concubitus* (intercourse), in practice the only betrothal ceremonies known were *Kesef* (money) and *Ketubah* (document). The text was along these lines: "Be consecrated to me by means of this money." Later a written document would replace this giving of money, but its mention would be included in the text.[11] In effect the betrothal and marriage rituals became one.

In the East, down to the present day, betrothal is still an important ritual both juridically and liturgically. The betrothal ceremony, such as it was envisaged by St. John Chrysostom, was performed by giving money as a guarantee, this being replaced later on by a ring. We read in the *Novellae* that Justinian obliged married people of a certain social standing to have a written contract.[12]

Crowning of the Bride and Bridegroom

The custom of crowning the bride and groom found in the Jewish ritual of marriage has been, since the sixth and seventh centuries down to the present, an important feature of the Greco-Byzantine Christian liturgy. As far back as that time, according to St. Gregory of Nazianzus, the priest would often himself crown the young couple.[13] St. John Chrysostom explains the Christian meaning of this action: "The bride and bridegroom are crowned as a symbol of their victory, because they have reached the door of marriage unconquered, never having been slaves to pleasure. If anyone has become a slave of pleasure by consorting with prostitutes he has been conquered. Why then does he wear a crown?"[14] Once a liturgy of marriage properly so called was formulated, its celebration no longer

took place in the home but in the church in the presence of the priest who would crown the couple. When prayer books were printed the crowning ceremony followed the same customs as found in the manuscripts. The priest would first crown the groom: "The servant of God, N. is crowned with the servant of God, N., in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", the text being repeated for the crowning of the bride. In removing the crowns, the priest would say to the groom:

> "May you be praised as was Abraham, blessed as Isaac and fruitful as Jacob, going forward in peace and observing the commandments of God in justice."

Then to the bride:

> "And you, O bride, may you be praised as was Sarah, happy as Rebekah, and fruitful as Rachel, finding your joy in your husband and observing the prescriptions of the law, since this is the way to please God."[15]

The crowning was considered so important that it meant in fact "to marry". The Oriental rites give different interpretations of this gesture, all of them of a deeply theological nature. The coptic rite is especially interesting in its relation to the Old Testament:

> "You who have crowned your saints with imperishable crowns, bless these crowns . . . May they be for this bride and bridegroom crowns of glory and honor (Ps. 8:6), of salvation and blessing, of joy, peace, rejoicing and gladness, of virtue and justice, of wisdom, understanding, strength and steadfastness. Crown them with glory and honor. The Father blesses, the Son crowns, the Holy Spirit perfects."[16]

Under the Huppah

We shall look at the Jewish custom of the Huppah and the possibility that some rituals in the West correspond to it.

In rabbinic Judaism the betrothed couple, after the meal, take

their place under the huppah (tent or canopy).[17] This rite seems to be the climax of the celebration and the first time that the couple are together. This poses a problem where the ritual of Christian marriage is concerned. In the sacramentary of Verona, the title given to the blessing of the bride after the Pater of the Mass is: "Velatio sponsae".[18] It is known from elsewhere that in the "pagan" Roman ritual the bride was clothed in a red veil, the flammeum, and that she was crowned with laurels. The question has been asked as to whether the Roman ritual took over this veiling ceremony for the blessing of the bride, but it can be safely set aside since a sufficient number are of the opinion that there is reference to another veiling here. Pope Siracus and St. Ambrose of Milan, both of the fourth century, speak in their letters about the veil which is held above the bride and groom during the blessing. St. Paulinus of Nola writing in the fifth century, gives evidence of the same custom when describing the marriage of a lector;[19] the same rite has been found in Normandy and Spain.[20]

It has been thought that this "velatio", affecting both bride and groom, and which still today is observed in some dioceses of France, comes rather from the Jewish custom of the huppah which symbolizes the union of the couple who are going to live together and which in fact gives them this right. In the ceremony of marriage according to rabbinic Judaism, the final words of the blessing which, like the huppah, are connected with the betrothal ritual, are as follows: "Blessed are you, O Lord, who sanctifies Israel through the huppah and betrothal."[21] We must see this rite in its connection with the blessing of the nuptial chamber which was so important in Roman-Merovingian Gaul where it was the oldest form of liturgical marriage. Several old texts prove this to be so as evidenced by the numerous blessings which could be quoted.[22] Almost the same rituals can be found in Spanish and English liturgies.[23]

The Glass of Wine

Other parallels with Jewish liturgy are found in another ritual, the blessing recited over a glass of wine. The Jewish marriage ceremony contains a blessing, or rather several blessings, which are recited over a glass of wine.[24] In the Greco-Byzantine Church the

blessing over a common cup of wine is made after the newlyweds have received communion.[25] This blessing refers to the marriage feast of Cana and the gift which Christ bestowed on the bride and bridegroom on that occasion. There is a reference here, however, to a cup of consecrated wine. Later on there grew up in Gaul the custom of blessing bread and wine in remembrance of the wedding at Cana. This was all the more so when only the wine was blessed. From the eleventh century on the different *Ordos* or Ceremonials record that the priest would most often give this blessing after the marriage in front of the door of the home of the newly married couple. Bride and groom would then drink from this cup which would either be given to them by the priest, or else they would give it to one another.[26] These were popular customs often brought over from England[27] to Normandy, for example, which could fit perfectly into the marriage liturgy without being strictly a part of it and were thus recognized by the Franco-Roman Churches. In addition to referring to the marriage feast of Cana, this custom also symbolized the responsibility which the newly-married couple were taking together for their life in common. Towards the close of the thirteenth century in central France the custom changed somewhat—the groom took a bite from a piece of bread and his bride followed suit, after which both drank from the cup of wine. This happened usually after the celebration of the Mass, but sometimes the ritual was linked with that of the blessing of the nuptial chamber as can be seen in a fifteenth century ritual from Paris.[28]

Christian Contribution to the Liturgy of Marriage

The Christian Church has made it very clear that marriage consists not in *concubitus* but in *consensus*. This legal emphasis may, at certain periods, have veiled the very rich theology of the sacrament of marriage under its juridical character. It should be recognized that, particularly in the Western Church, it has often been difficult to go beyond this legal aspect and to establish a deep theology which would touch the lives of the married couple. The New Testament, however, can provide texts with a very profound theology rich in vital teachings.

Here we must return to the Old Testament. We could have done

so at the beginning of this article; we thought it better, however, to sum up the doctrine of the Old Testament here, showing how that of the New Testament is both in continuity and in discontinuity with it.

The Concept of Marriage and Its Evolution

In the Ancient Near East sexuality was conceived of as being in the realm of the sacred as can be seen from various myths and the manner in which so many of the rituals were performed.[29] They are founded on the legends of the gods and goddesses and their amours, a kind of an archetype that society tries to reproduce. Sexuality, then, is linked with the legends of the deities. Fecundity and procreation are associated with creation which is the work of a father god and a mother goddess, and the raising of sexuality to the realm of the sacred is in direct relation to this archetype. Love seen as feeling or sensual pleasure is thus often described in mythology and represented in its rituals.

In some way it could be said that biblical revelation is in continuity with this pagan sociological vision, but it breaks with it on the ideological and ritualistic levels. Sexual myths lose their meaning since there is but one God (Deut. 6:4) and there is no goddess. Sexual rites such as sacred prostitution (Deut. 23:18, 19) or magical acts of sexual union with animals (Is. 22:18; Deut. 27:21; Lev. 18:23) disappear likewise. Israel, however, continued to consider sex as sacred since life has its beginnings in God, thus explaining the levitical laws of impurity. Two biblical texts are significant. The older, that of Gen. ch. 2, shows how man and woman belong to one another; they are alike and form one flesh (Gen. 2:21–23; 2:18; 2:24). The later text stresses the identical dignity of man and woman with regard to monogamy: both together are the rulers of creation (Gen. 1:28,29). Fruitfulness has its source in God and the creation of the two sexes is the work of God who is good (Gen. 1:31). The creative word of God expressing his will is then the source from which marriage draws its sacred character and the first couple created is, by that very fact, the ideal model on which society can be built. The interpersonal relationships of the two unite them in the flesh and their social function is one of fruitfulness.

Under the leadership of the prophets the post-exilic ideal of

matrimony was reached. Before this time, however, some interesting examples of marriages are found going back before the eighth century B.C. In the story of Abraham and Sarah it can be seen that concubinage was legal and that the wife was still almost her husband's slave (Gen. 13:10–19); in another passage there was question of ensuring the future of a people (Gen. 29:32). It would be unjust, however, to exclude the notion of true love from these unions. Jacob, for instance, served Laban for fourteen years in order to have Rachel as his wife (Gen. 29:20–30). What comes first, though, is the fruitfulness of the race, even if we find the means taken not a little strange, chapter 38 of Genesis being an example.[31]

Beginning with the time of the exile, however, the vision of marriage changed radically. If we look at the prophetic books and Wisdom literature we can find important texts concerning the indissolubility of marriage, as in Malachi 2:14–16. To safeguard it, one must be prudent with the foreigner because physical and sensual love cannot be conceived of apart from fidelity (Prov. 5:1–14; 7:1–27). The perfect wife is described in Proverbs chapter 31; while describing the unfaithful wife, Sirach also lists the virtues of the model wife (25:13–26:18). The book of Tobit is of prime importance for biblical theology. The married couple is doubtless always dramatically exposed to evil (Tob. Vulg. 6:14,15); a chaste and holy love is possible, however, and procreation will be the fruit, the aim of marriage (Tob. Vulg. 6:21,22). One can admire the prayer of Tobias and Sarah which will be adopted by Christian liturgy, inserting into the theme of God's covenant with his people that of Christ with his Church. Although there are many different theories concerning the Canticle of Canticles, it should be noted that the joys of human and physical love are treated of rather than the theme of fruitfulness. The setting is that of paradise and, from the theological point of view, an eschatological vision of man and woman with innocence restored.[32]

When Christ speaks of marriage he refers to the text of Genesis (1:27; 2:24), the image of the ideal archetype before the fall. Christ has come to rebuild the Kingdom and his only vision is that of this couple. If one were permitted formerly to send one's wife away *propter duritiam cordis* (on account of the hardness of your hearts) this

will no longer be possible in the new Kingdom (Mt. 19:1–9). Neither polygamy nor divorce has any place in this Kingdom (Mt. 19:6); and if a man put away his wife and take another he commits adultery (Mt. 5:32; 19:9). The difficulties of married life are there, however, and mercy must find a place—the woman taken in adultery is pardoned (Jn. 8:3–9); Christ has come "to call sinners to repentance" (Mk. 2:15–17; Lk. 18:9–14; Jn. 8:11). The new law is more exacting than the old: to look upon a woman with desire is already to have committed adultery; nevertheless, charity can cover a multitude of sins and sinners and prostitutes will go before many others into the Kingdom of heaven (Mt. 21:31,32).

In her life and experience, the Church takes Christ's ideal and makes a decision about it, giving a rule of life which is definite and final so that divorce is categorically forbidden (I Cor. 7:10,11). The married couple will doubtless run up against problems constantly—concrete problems which will require urgent and practical solutions. The Old Testament was preoccupied about this and the letters of the Apostles have attempted to find a solution (cf. Col. 3:18,19; Eph. 5:21–23; I Tim. 2:9–15; I Pet. 3:1–7). It remains difficult, however, for a baptized person, in spite of his conformity to the principles of Christ, to integrate his sexuality into his Christian life.

St. Paul wishes to help the faithful at Corinth to integrate their sexuality into their married life (I Cor. 7:1–9). In the troubled times in which they were living, continency could prove to be a danger which he denounced (I Cor. 7:1,3,5); thus man and wife have mutual rights and duties (I Cor. 7:3,4). Although in the life of the Kingdom which is in the process of formation continency is presented as an ideal, this cannot be for everyone; gifts are varied according to the call that God gives (I Cor. 7:5,6; 7:7,17,20,24). Marriage does not take away chastity, however; it supposes it in the gift that husband and wife make to each other in rejecting egotism (I Cor. 7:3,4); this requires that sexuality be somewhat dominated by ascetism (I Cor. 7:2,5). Happily the Spirit helps the baptized person to make the works of the flesh die within him or her (Rom. 8:13). The baptized person is the one who wishes to share in the death of the Lord in order to share also in his resurrection (Rom. 6:1–14).

The Mystery of Christ and the Church

From its very beginnings the Church has emphasized the mystery of Christ and of the Church. In prophetic writings the married couple could find their archetype in the covenant which God has made with the human race, an imperfect covenant, it is true, but one in which the Lord could be continually sought while looking forward to the last day. Through his paschal mystery, Christ has come to fulfil this covenant in its plenitude; it has become objectively perfect since the death-resurrection mystery of Christ is a decisive turning point in the history of the world. The model of the betrothed couple is no longer an abstract but exists in very fact, and the covenant of God with men has become a nuptial mystery through Christ. Furthermore Christ himself is the bridegroom and cannot understand how those invited to the wedding feast could be in mourning when the bridegroom is with them; the days will come when he will no longer be there and then they can fast (Mt. 9:15; Mk. 2:19,20; Lk. 5:34,35). The parable of the wedding feast which Jesus recounted to his disciples is very clear on this point. The king prepared a wedding feast for his son, the king being God and Christ his son. Here we see the nuptial mystery of the Kingdom assimilated to the mystery of Christ the bridegroom (Mt. 8:11). The parable of the ten virgins likewise shows Christ as the bridegroom (Mt. 25:1–13). The passage in the Apocalypse which describes the Lamb and the wedding ritual cannot fail to make an impression on the reader. The bride adorned and presented to her bridegroom is the whole of humanity, represented now as a woman, now as a city, the new and heavenly Jerusalem (Apoc. 21:2,10–17), foretold by Ezechiel (chap. 40) and Isaiah (chaps. 54,60–62).

But this nuptial mystery is seen as a clear doctrine above all in the letter to the Ephesians (5:21–32) where St. Paul has set down the mystery of Christ united with the Church. Adam was the type of the one who was to come (Rom. 5:14). If sin has come to everyone through the first Adam, the whole world has been renewed through the second Adam, Christ having given the world the power to share in his resurrection (Rom. 5:15–18,21; 6:5–11; I Cor. 15:49; Eph. 4:23,24). In opposition to Christ who has thus renewed the face of the world is the world itself. Christ acts towards humanity as a

bridegroom towards his bride; Christ loves it and delivers himself for it (Gal. 2:20). The letter to the Ephesians clearly and succinctly sums up this doctrine:

> "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, have cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5:25–27.

The love of Christ has transformed humanity in order to unite it to himself, thus making it his pure bride. Christ offered himself completely in order to work his miracle of nuptial love. His love is redemptive and his bride has become his own body (Eph. 5:28–31). This is the root of what makes man and woman one same body (Gen. 2:24): Christ "is before all things and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:17,18). This doctrine is applied to the married couple whom God has created in his image (Gen. 1:26,27). If sexuality belongs to the beginning of creation, it does not, however, owe its sacred character to this fact—the original prototype looks forward to the fulness of time. The mystery of the relationship between God and humanity can be glimpsed already in the union of man and woman. The love of husband and wife has been signified in the highest manner by the Word of God who has redeemed humanity. Woman, in her relationship with man, finds her true meaning through the Word of God, her creator and redeemer, so much so that, for Christianity, marriage is a type or symbol which is fulfilled in the incarnation of the Son of God through whom all humanity is brought into a union of indissoluble love. The liturgy of the feast of the Epiphany has magnificently joined the theme of the marriage feast of Cana to that of covenant and marriage itself:

> "Hodie coelesti Sponso iuncta est Ecclesia, quoniam in Iordane lavat Christus eius crimina: currunt cum muneribus magi ad regales nuptias, et ex aqua facta vino laetantur convivae" (Antiphon of the Benedictus, Lauds). (Today the Church is united to her bridegroom because in the Jordan

> Christ has washed away her faults; the magi hastened with their gifts to the royal nuptials and the guests rejoiced in the water made wine.)[33]

In John's Gospel, therefore, the water of the purification of the Jews which refers to the Old Covenant, becomes wine, sign of the New Covenant in the blood of Christ, and the theme of covenant is based on the Cana episode whose setting is a marriage and a wedding banquet.

One might be tempted to think that we have here the literary and mystical presentation of an ideal which we are incapable of living, but we know that, on the level of faith, the whole of the Christian life has nuptial connotations and that each Christian lives this mystery in his own situation, according to his own charism, with its difficulties and struggles, divided between the flesh and the spirit (Gal. 5:16,17; Rom. 7:14–25). Conscious of this drama, St. Paul adds that, as a member of Christ, of the Church who is a bride, the Christian has been purified by the washing of water (Eph. 5:26), being drawn from the corruption of a sinful humanity and brought into the covenant in all its purity. The Apostle has thus dared to dictate to the bridal couple the way in which they should live—a moral life flowing from the sacrament of marriage through which the nuptial mystery of Christ is manifested in them. The mutual relations of Christ and of the Church thus become the principle and the model for their married life (Eph. 5:21–32). Each of them, joined through the covenant and communion with God, is truly united to the other; carnal love is transfigured by love and charity; they are "one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

III. THE LITURGY OF VATICAN II

It cannot be denied that, with the exception of the lectionary which offers readings that emphasize what marriage is as well as its roots in the Old and New Testaments, the ritual of marriage itself is too much concerned with the juridical level of promises, too exclusively centred on the level of the human made sacred, without showing sufficiently that human love is surpassed in the covenant made by God and perfectly fulfilled in him through his Son in the Spirit.

We would be unjust, however, if we did not immediately qualify what we have just stated. Until recently weddings used to be celebrated before the Mass, reminiscent of the time when promises were exchanged in the house or, later on, "in facie Ecclesiae". In the ritual of Vatican II the celebration of the sacrament of marriage has been included in the Mass itself, in addition to which the readings show clearly that the eucharistic celebration places this sacrament in the context of covenant which we have claimed belongs to it. It is true that the deep meaning of this theology is not as apparent as we should like to see it. It would be necessary to have the very text of the wedding ceremony preceded by a formula which would point out clearly and concretely that the promises made by the bride and groom mirror the covenant made between God and humanity in Christ and in the Spirit, and that the young couple thus become for everyone a figure of this covenant.

If we wish to state more precisely the deficiencies of the new ritual, two further points could be made: the lack of reference to the notion of covenant in the form of the sacrament itself, and the fact that the bride and groom exchange rings. This custom was practised as far back as the eleventh century in Germany, for example, while on the contrary the people of Normandy observed for a long time the custom of one ring given to the wife by the husband, a custom that was being observed in Paris up to the fifteenth century, and which demonstrates well the covenant which the bridegroom (Christ) makes with his bride (the Church). In our days we have slipped into a deplorable kind of equality. There was, in fact, a complementarity that was stressed through the blessing that belonged exclusively to the bride and which the reform of Vatican II, in giving it to both, has turned into a rather simplistic equality. Would it not be more meaningful to return to the practice of one ring, telling the young couple and the faithful in general that this gesture symbolizes the covenant made possible through Christ, and keeping for the bride her special blessing which consecrates her as a collaborator in the building up of the Kingdom? These suggestions might seem to be very far from the concepts entertained today regarding the equality of the sexes; but should we not go beyond this level so that husband and wife can be raised to the level of the gift of God and of Christ who, above all else, consecrates their covenant and their fidelity to one another.

Choice of Readings

Rather than remaining on a negative plain, however, let us see how the readings as set out in the lectionary have enriched the theology and the experience of marriage. Once again we find recourse to the Old Testament and to the perspectives of the New. While it is not possible to examine all the readings the bride and groom have for their choice, we should like at least to refer to them and see the position of each one briefly.

There are eight readings from the Old Testament all told. The first of these, taken from Genesis, tells of the creation of man and woman (Gen. 1: 26–28, 31a), the theological implications of which we have stressed already. In two other readings from Genesis there is a clear insistence on the unity of marriage: "and they become one flesh" (Gen. 2:18–24); and the blessing of Rebekah: "Our sister, be the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them!" (Gen. 24:48–51, 58–67). Rebekah covered herself with her veil on meeting her future husband and Isaac brought her into the tent: he "took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her."

Next we have two readings from the Book of Tobit. The first one, (Tob. Vulg. 7:9c, 10, 11c–17), gives us an idea of the ritual of marriage in the Old Testament. Raguel took the right hand of his daughter and put it in Tobias' right hand saying: "May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob be with you, that he may unite you and bless you." The marriage contract was then made out and they ate together. The second reading is taken from Tob. Vulg. 8:5–10, stressing the fact that Jewish marriage is not like that of the pagans. Then follows the well-known prayer in which it is affirmed that marriage does not only consist in physical love but also in the continuance of the human race.

The three other readings proposed are ones that we have referred to already above, namely, the passage from the Canticle of Canticles (chap. 8): "for love is as strong as death", whose special meaning has already been pointed out, in particular, that of the vision of paradise given to the bride and bridegroom which, through their Christian marriage, they should bring into their daily living. Then there is a passage from Sirach (26:1–4; 16–21) describing the

qualities of the perfect wife, and that of Jeremiah (31:31,32a, 33,34) which foretells the new covenant and in which we find the archetype of Christian marriage.

As second readings the lectionary proposes eleven texts, either from the letters of the Apostles or the Apocalypse of John. Chap. 8 of Paul's letter to the Romans needs to be explained in order to justify its inclusion. At the centre of this passage (Rom. 8:31b–35, 37–39) is the phrase: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" This is a reference to the marriage of Christ and his Church, consequently to that of every Christian and in particular, to that of the man and woman who are becoming types of the covenant. Another passage from the letter to the Romans: "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom. 12:1,2, 9–18), refers to spiritual worship, the only lesson to be drawn being on the level of the moral life since St. Paul enumerates the attitudes which this worship exacts.

But the offering of our bodies to God is, in marriage, fulfilled through the mutual offering of the bodies of husband and wife; thus sexuality enters into this offering which is an image of the covenant of Christ with his Church. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians (I Cor. 6:13c–15a, 17–20): "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit." The body of the baptized person belongs to the Lord and is a member of the body of Christ. The text mentioned above recalls that if the Christian is a free person, then by reason of this very liberty perversion is forbidden to him or her. Certain marriages, one contracted with a prostitute for example, could only be a profanation of the temple of the Holy Spirit. Union with Christ is as intimate as is union of the flesh, and the Christian couple should, in their relations, attempt to imitate the holiness of the divine intimacy without any profanation.

In the first letter to the Corinthians (12:31–13:8a) St. Paul affirms the importance of charity and enumerates its qualities, a teaching belonging to all Christians and to every moment of life. In the context of marriage, however, it seems opportune to recall the primacy of this charity. A reading from the letter to the Colossians makes the same point. While addressed to all Christians, it is especially fitting in the context of marriage because charity is the only thing which allows the oblation, the complete gift of one to the other

without an egotistical turning in on self. The first letter of Peter is likewise a fervent appeal for union among brothers and sisters.

Two other readings are taken from the first letter of St. John, the first making the point that love should be shown "in deed and in truth" (I Jn. 3:18–24), the second being an affirmation that God is love (I Jn. 4:7–12). The love of God for his people and the love of Christ for the Church are the archetypes of marriage which in itself becomes the presence of the divine covenant among us. St. Paul presents this nuptial mystery in another reading of the Mass (Eph. 5:2a, 21–33), a text which was frequently found in older lectionaries and which is the starting point of the theology of marriage: "This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church."

The lectionary of the nuptial Mass then gives ten pericopes from the Gospels whose choice has been carefully made, requiring from the future bride and groom and the priest who will bless their union a deep reflection together.

Some of them concern all Christians but are adapted to the concrete circumstances of married couples. Thus we have the beatitudes (Mt. 5:1–12): "Rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven." The Christian husband and wife should try to fulfil these beatitudes which will guide their steps on the eschatological way. It has been remarked already that the theme of the renewal of the covenant, of regeneration, is referred to by St. John in his account of the marriage feast of Cana (Jn. 2:1–11). If we limited our attention to the fact that Christ shares in the Christian wedding ceremony and blesses it we would seriously diminish the value of this text for use in the liturgy of marriage. We have stressed already the importance of this text, showing how the feast of the Epiphany links the theme of covenant with that of marriage which mirrors it. The Christian bride and groom are then a light to the world as is indicated by the choice of Matthew 5:13–16. They are lights for other Christians because they are a sign of the fulfilment of the covenant of God with his people and of Christ with his Church. "What God has joined together let no man put asunder" is the theme of Matthew 19:3–6 because they are no longer two but one flesh as Mark affirms in another pericope (Mk. 10:6–9).

Several other readings magnify love; it is the greatest command-

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ment (Mt. 22:35–40), the commandment of loving one another (Jn. 15:12–16), of abiding in the love of God (Jn. 15:9–12). We are, in effect, not simply "made one" in Christ, but have become "perfectly one" (Jn. 17:20–26). If this be true for all Christians, how much more so is it true for married couples. United in Christ, they "build their house upon a rock" (Mt. 7:21, 24–29); their union is able to stand up against all storms because it is founded on the love of Christ and the Church which is the archetype of their own love.

As we see it, Vatican II has made a great effort in order to give the bride and groom on their wedding day a choice of readings which will shed light on the fundamental doctrine of marriage. We could have made use of this lectionary in order to illustrate how Christianity has added its contribution to the doctrine of marriage that we find in the Old Testament. The liturgy is not, however, simply a course of instruction nor a body of doctrine; rather we must let it speak to us because in so doing we let Christ himself speak to us in the ever-present proclaiming of his Gospel.

Christian liturgy is therefore in direct continuity with the Jewish liturgy of marriage. In this matter, as in the Eucharist for example, similar forms can and often do draw out a new richness.

Notes

1. *Epistle to Diognetus,* Ed. K. Bilhmeyer, *Die Apost. Väter* I, Tubingen 1924, 114 I. 11–14.
2. Before (in the presence of) the Church. The connotation is not only theologically juridical but local, i.e. in front of the church door.
3. For the history of marriage in both East and West see the book of K. Ritzer, now considered a classic, *Formen, Riten und Religioses Brauchtum der Ebeschliessung in den Christlichen Kirchen des ersten Jahrtausend,* Aschendorff, Munster, 1962. For a theological-liturgical vision of marriage, see A. Nocent, *Contribution a l'etude du rituel du mariage dans Euglogia, Miscellanea Liturgica in onore di. B. Neunheuser,* Studia Anselmiana, 68, *Analecta Liturgica,* I, 1979, pp. 242–265. See also: K. Stevenson, *Nuptial blessing. A Study of Christian Marriage Rites* (Alenir Club collections, 64), London 1982. B. Kleinheyer, *Due Feier ober Trau-*

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nung, in *Gottesdienst der Kirche,* Regensburg 1984, pp. 69–150. A. Nocent, *Il matrimonio virsticus,* in *Anamnesis,* Vol. 3/1, pp. 301–366, Marietti 1986.

4. In the Sacramentary of Verona, under the title: *Velatio Nuptialis,* L.C. Mohlberg, *Sacramentarium Veronense,* Rome, Herder, 1956, new edition 1978, nn. 1105–1110.
5. Ritzer, *op. cit.,* p. 56.
6. Numerous allusions to this have been found in manuscripts from Central France. Cf. J.B. Molin, Pr. Mutembe, *Le Rituel du Mariage en France du XIIe au XVIe siècle,* Paris, Beauchesne, 1974, p. 246.
7. K. Ritzer, *op. cit.,* p. 240.
8. Veronense nn. 1106, 1109, 1110.
9. *Sacramentaire Gélasien,* Rome, Herder, 1960, n. 1446. Note the word: *serviret* (that a chaste fecundity may serve to multiply . . .). This has been modified in the Gelasian Sacramentaries of the eighth century and in the Gregorian Sacramentary which has the word *servaretur,* which changes the theology of the prayer, going from the theological to the moral order: that the chaste fecundity of marriage be preserved while sons of adoption are conceived. Gregorian Sacramentary, ed. Deshusses, n. 835.
10. J. Neubauer, *Beitrage z. Gesch. des Bibl.-talmud. "Eherechts",* pp. 24, 25, Leipzig 1920. K. Ritzer, *op. cit.,* p. 57.
11. Ritzer, *op. cit.,* p. 58.
12. Justinian, Novellae, 75, 5f.
13. Gregory of Nazianzus, Epistle 231, PG 37, 374.
14. John Chrysostom, *Homily IX on the Letter to Timothy,* PG 62, 546.
15. J. Goar, *Eucologion sive Rituale Graecorum,* Venice 1730; Akademische Druk, Graz, Austria 1960.
16. See: C. Valenziano, *Costanti e Variazioni in Celebrazioni Coniugali di Culture Cristiane* in AA.VV. *La Celebrazione del Matrimonio Cristiano,* Bologna, Ed. Dehoniane 1977, p. 328. Contains an excellent study on the manner in which the rites have undergone adaptations.
17. Ritzer, *op. cit.,* p. 58.
18. Sacr. Veronense, L.C. Mohlberg, Op. Cit., n. 1105–1110.
19. Paulinus of Nola, *Carmen* 25, CSEL 30, 238–245.

20. Isidore of Seville, *Ethymologie,* 19, 25. W.M. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispanensis Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri 20,* vol. 2. Oxford 1911. E. Martene, *De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritubus,* Ordo II.
21. H.L. Strack, P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash,* München 1922, 2, 396.
22. J.B. Molin, P. Mutembe, *op. cit.*, pp. 255–270.
23. Ritzer, *op. cit.*, p. 299.
24. Strack, Billerbeck, *op. cit.*, I, 514f.
25. Ritzer, *op. cit.*, p. 202f.
26. J.B. Molin, P. Mutembe, *op. cit.*, p. 262. A. Nocent, *Art. cit.*, p. 258f.
27. Many cultural exchanges took place between England and Normandy about the tenth century.
28. Paris B.N. ms. lat. 1211.
29. See for example, M. Eliade, *Traité d'Histoire des Religions,* Paris 1949. J. Henniger, *Le Mythe en Ethnologie,* in the article, *Mythe* in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible,* Supplement, VI, col. 225–246.
30. See E. Testa, *Genesi, Introduzione, Storia Primitiva* in *La Sacra Bibbia* Rome, Marietti 1969.
31. The story of Tamar and Judah concerns the problem of descendants.
32. J.P. Audet, *Les sens du Cantique des Cantiques. Poème d'amour mué en écrit de sagesse,* Revue Biblique 1954, pp. 67f. With an important bibliography.
33. Cf. Jn. 1:29–34; Mt. 3:13–17; Mk. 1:9–11; Mt. 2; Jn. 2:1–11.

A Jewish Concept of Death

Giuseppe Laras

Due to its categoric and absolutely specific nature, it is beyond dispute that the phenomenon of death instinctively arouses fear and distress in the human person who is both the possessor and expression of life. Death appears to be the end: an emptying, an annihilation and a negation, the opposite of what is, of what exists; in other words, the opposite of man himself. A painful and anxious feeling of fear and especially of powerlessness grips him and accompanies him from the moment he recognizes and reflects instinctively on this strange, unavoidable, uncontrollable exit from life.

It is, however, just as certain that the very same phenomenon of death, while maintaining its categoric distinction of apparent negation of life, leads to a very different attitude in those who possess a religious vision of life. By religious vision, I mean a concept of reality which is neither automatic nor pantheistic, but rather centered on the idea of a God, Creator of the world over whose destiny he watches and waits.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF JUDAISM

Judaism which, with its ethical monotheism, has introduced a revolutionary concept of reality into the world (a reality which, instead of being left to itself through the necessity of fate, persists right from its birth and development through to its fulfilment within the free and conscious divine will), could not avoid posing the problem of death, together with so many other problems, from a perspective

different from that in which it could be viewed, either instinctively, or outside a religious point of view.

Let us say right away, however, that a dichotomy between soul and body, between spirit and matter, is foreign to the Jewish mentality in the sense that only the first of these two elements would be noble and valid, while the second would bear the traits of a negative accident, both superfluous and constraining. God has created the spirit, but even earlier he created matter.

> Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. (Gen. 2:7)

This quotation, as well as other theological considerations which may derive from it, stresses a very important exemplary point which is, that life—"the world of here and now"—is a gift of God lavished upon us, which all of us must use in the best way we can, both in its material and spiritual expressions, conforming with what is God's will made known in our regard.

THE GIFT OF LIFE

Now if life, *this* life, is intended to be an intrinsically good gift which must be used within the framework of a serene relationship of obedience to God, it becomes clear that the duty entrusted to man as a collaborator and completor of creation aims to lay the world, *this* world, under the dominion of the Almighty.

Admitting this necessity—which emerges from the first pages of the Torah and continues to be confirmed in other biblical texts too—of underlining the holiness of the temporal-human dimension in the framework of a vaster reality including invisible inexplicable aspects, a reason can already be detected as to the lack of detailed explanation concerning the soul and its fate after the death of the body. Obviously, this does not mean that no allusions, traces or relevant indications on such a matter do not occur in the bible. On the contrary, they are easy to verify. According to our way of understanding, the "world to come"—"Olam Ha-Ba"—is the dimension in which the soul takes refuge after having left the body at the moment of death.

Even without a specific explanation in the Torah concerning this, we should nonetheless be in a position to sense that the soul is not subject to death. Indeed, if the soul really is the divine part in us—*So God created man in his own image* (Gen. 1:27); *When God created man he made him in the likeness of God* (Gen. 5:1)—it cannot be admitted that it could be susceptible to annihilation and death in the same manner as the body which decomposes. The soul cannot decompose and disappear, it becomes detached from the body, and the "divine image" imprinted in us persists in its essence, even beyond the body and without its support.

On this topic, the famous poem of Koheleth:

> The dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. (Eccles. 12:7)

besides consoling us, is all the more explicit and precise.

RESURRECTION

Another argument closely associated with the soul and the "world to come" deals with the "resurrection of the dead", a belief this, which is perhaps older and certainly more explicit than the belief in immortality.

Precise examples can be found in:

Deut. 32:39:
I kill and I make alive;
I wound and I heal . . .
I Sam. 2:6:
The Lord kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up . . .
Is. 26:19:
Thy dead shall live, their bodies shall rise,
O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!
For thy dew is a dew of light,
and on the land of the shades thou wilt let it fall . . .
Ezek. 37:
This is the well-known story of the vision of the "dry bones", on which flesh and sinews grow and which come to

life again (even if, for some people, this seems more probably and more simply to symbolize the national revival of Israel).
Dan. 12:2:
And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,
some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt . . .

Together with the concepts of the *Messianic Age* and *Reward*, these ideas or beliefs which we are considering are all elements which only seem to be autonomous but are in fact part of a more general single problem which comes under the generic name of "Olam Ha-Ba" or "World to Come", a term we have used until now in a more limited sense.

In spite of the passing of the centuries with their resulting changes in the political and environmental fields which almost always have been traumatic, in spite of contact with different cultures and ways of thinking, Israel has always remained faithful to those principles of faith, even if all it has done has been to enrich them with more exhaustive explanatory details, and to raise certain of them in some cases to the ranks of actual dogmatic propositions.

The belief in the immortality of the soul and in the resurrection of the dead is, however, already well established and widespread in the century which precedes the common era, and even earlier, in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books.

It must be remembered that the basic element which—on the doctrinal level—opposes the Pharisees to the Sadducees, is actually the *resurrection* (denied by the latter) and almost certainly, the *immortality of the soul* as well.

BEARERS OF TRADITION

Even though it may be difficult within the scope of our present discourse to find systematic theories which are complete and uniform in the vast aggadic sector of Talmudic literature, it is certain that Pharisaism (the majority's current, or in other words, the most faithful and characteristic expression of Judaism, which after the

national catastrophe of 70 C.E. guarantees the survival of the Jewish people) believed in a world of souls separate from their bodies.

Particularly apt is the famous saying of Rab (constantly referred to by medieval Jewish theologians):

> The future world is not like this world. In the future world there is no eating nor drinking nor propagation nor business nor jealousy nor hatred nor competition, but the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads feasting on the brightness of the divine presence, as it says, *And they beheld God, and did eat and drink.* (Ex. 24:11) T.B. Ber. 17a

Concerning the aspect or character of such a heavenly dimension, even if constant references to a *Gan Eden* (garden of delight) and a *Gehenna* (place of suffering and flames) abound, a general brief deduction can be made that in such a dimension souls live an experience which is completely different from the experience of the material world, deriving from it positive or negative feelings according to the way in which they have lived in their previous earthly life. As regards the resurrection, the latter represents no particular difficulty about how it should be understood and defined (even if, in the light of pure logic it seems impenetrable) while on the other hand it poses no small problems such as to *when* it will come to pass, for *how long* it will last and *how* it will be coordinated with the world of souls.

THE MEANING OF RESURRECTION

What does "resurrection" mean? The remaking or rebuilding of the material body through the recuperation of all its members no matter how decomposed and changed they may have become and from wherever they may have ended up; and the re-entry into this reborn body of its own original soul. Ezekiel's image (Ch. 37) mentioned above helps us understand precisely how the resurrection will happen, at least according to those who attribute to it a particular descriptive and prophetic capacity, and consider it a divine "supermiracle": a kind of second birth of Adam, moulded outwardly of earth and inwardly of spirit.

Among the many problems posed by the resurrection, as we have said, there is one in particular which should be noticed: that is, what will happen once the resurrection of bodies has come about?

The answer seems to be the following: the resurrection is depicted as being the final point, presumably, in earthly experience, when the recreated or reborn body, even if it is lightened and refined in its substance, will pass or will be introduced into the world to come, to remain there for good, or until God so desires.

But how can a body enter into the world to come, a world which is entirely spiritual and lacking by definition any material receptivity? Yet again, given that in the world of the spirit such a body will not be able to manifest any of its material physiological functions, how can it be admitted that God creates, or better still, recreates organs destined not to be used?

Precisely to overcome these objections (how well we know them! They appear serious and insuperable when we examine them from a logical angle which is rigidly human, but lose much of their vigor if they are correlated to one unique, unrepeatable, divine "action"), Maimonides—the great medieval theologian (1135–1204)—breaks the link between the resurrection of the body and the definitive dimension of the world of souls, explaining that the miracle of the resurrection (not necessarily linked to the "end of days" as regards its occurrence), would be able to happen at any moment of the human experience and especially that it will end with a new physical death, which will open the way to a final re-entry of the soul into the "world to come."

This position, demonstrated by the philosopher of Cordoba regarding the resurrection, represents in truth, a rather solitary position which is scarcely supported by the great Jewish theologians, who accordingly prefer—notwithstanding the above mentioned difficulties—the traditional interpretation which links the resurrection to the world of souls.

> R. Hiyya b. Abba also said in the name of R. Johanan: All the prophets prophesied only for the days of the Messiah, but as for the world to come, "Eye hath not seen, oh God, beside Thee". (Is. 64:4) T.B. Ber. 34b

Jewish and Christian Liturgy in the Face of Death

Carmine Di Sante

The best way to understand how a religious group faces up to death is to analyse the ritual language in which it embodies and expresses its understanding of the event. For a community of believers, liturgy is in fact the privileged place for the production, translation and interpretation of existential attitudes and basic values.

This means that, in order to understand how Jews and Christians face up to death, one has to analyse not only biblical, theological and literary texts, but above all liturgical ones. A comparison between Jewish and Christian funeral rites will reveal similarities and dissimilarities without much difficulty. It is impossible to undertake such a comparison here, given the complexity of the two rites and the limited space available; only two texts will be considered, the Jewish *Kaddish* and the Christian *Memento* for the Dead.[1] These texts have been chosen for their substantial theological content but also because they are central to the issue, other texts being more peripheral and derivative. They are given here side by side for easy comparison:

The Jewish Kaddish	*The Christian Memento*
Mourner: Magnified and sanctified be his great Name in the world which he hath created according to his will. May he establish his kingdom during your life	Remember N. in baptism he/she died in Christ: may he/she also share his resurrection,

and during your days, and during the life of all the house of Israel, even speedily and at a near time, and say ye, Amen.
Cong. and Mourner: Let his great Name be blessed for ever and to all eternity.
Mourner: Blessed, praised and glorified, exalted, extolled and honoured, magnified and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, blessed be he; though he be high above all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations, which are uttered in the world; and say ye, Amen.
Congregation: Amen.
Mourner: May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life for us and for all Israel; and say ye, Amen.
Congregation: Amen.
Mourner: He who maketh peace in his high places, may he make peace for us and for all Israel; and say ye, Amen.

when Christ will raise our mortal
bodies
and make them like his own in glory.
Welcome into your kingdom our departed brothers and sisters,
and all who have left this world in
your friendship.
There we hope to share in your glory,
when every tear will be wiped away.
In that day we shall see you, our God,
as you are.
We shall become like you and praise
you for ever
through Christ our Lord,
from whom all good things come.

Both the texts express and inspire sentiments of faith, hope and abandonment to God. Faced with the death of a brother, there is no room for either sadness or despair, but rather an attitude of serenity is revealed, almost ready to break into song.

It is faith/*emunah* in God which makes this attitude possible: a God seen and experienced as he who "created the world according to his will" (*Kaddish*), "calls from this life to another", "unites in the death of Christ", "wipes away all tears" (*Memento*). Thus in the face of death, both the Jewish and Christian believer feel themselves once more awakened to a personal conviction that they are rooted in the God of creation and redemption, the God of covenant and salvation.

Thanks to this conviction, the prayer of both becomes an appeal, the *Kaddish* expressing it in the language of desire (the word *may* is used more than once) and the Christian text in that of petition (remember . . . may he share . . . welcome . . . we hope . . .).

Nevertheless, in spite of this basic theological structure, there are notable dissimilarities in the two texts, not only because of the obvious Christological dimension which characterizes the Christian prayer but also because of the different dynamic which sustains and supports them. There are two fundamental differences. The *first* concerns the predominance of doxology/praise in the Jewish text, an element completely lacking in the Christian one (not only here but in almost all the other liturgical texts used for funerals), in which the petition/invocation element predominates.

In the *Kaddish* the mourner breaks out, as it were, into a hymn of praise which cannot be restrained:

> "Blessed, praised and glorified, exalted, extolled and honoured, magnified and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be he; though he be high above all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations, which are uttered in the world; and say ye, Amen."

There are thirteen expressions of praise (without counting those which precede or follow this text) and, notwithstanding this, they are considered insufficient to praise God who is "high above all praise". It is certainly a surprising text, considering that it is spoken in presence of a loved one who has died. Nevertheless the text is undoubtedly one of the purest expressions of Jewish faith:

> "When the dark grave swallows what was dearest to us on earth, it is then that Judaism bids us say: It was God who gave this joy unto us; it is God who has taken it from us to himself. We will not wail, nor murmur, nor complain. We will exclaim: Blessed be the name of the Lord."[2]

The *second* difference is to be found in the content of the petitions formulated in the two texts. Both the *Kaddish* and the *Memento* ask God for something, but whereas in the former the object of the

request is glorification of the name of God ("Magnified be his great name . . . may he establish his kingdom") and peace for the house of Israel ("may there be peace . . . for us and for all Israel"), in the latter it is salvation for the soul of the deceased ("may he share in the Resurrection of Christ"), for all the faithful departed ("receive into your kingdom our departed brothers and sisters") and for all the living who will one day die ("we hope to share in your glory"). In the face of death the Christian seems to be preoccupied above all with his own fate in the hereafter, while the Jew is concerned only with the glory of God and the peace of those who are left behind (there is no reference in the *Kaddish* to death and the hereafter).

This difference is even more marked in Christian theology dealing with the "Four Last Things", which in recent centuries has been characterised by an overweaning preoccupation with what will happen after death; so much so that it has sometimes been transformed into a kind of fortune-telling! Today we are realizing more and more clearly that the problem of the "Last Things" is concerned with the here-and-now before it is concerned with the hereafter. Death, like any other moment or action in life, demands an attitude of faith. The problem is not *what* awaits us after death (we can leave that to the love and creative imagination of God!), but *in whom* we ground our life and also our death. The *Kaddish* is the purest act of faith in the will of God; as he has been recognized and proclaimed *tov* (good) during life, so he will also be proclaimed good at the moment of death; it has thus a very valuable contribution to make to any reshaping of a theology of death and to the development of a more trustful and constructive attitude to death.

Both Jews and Christians acknowledge the God of covenant and mercy. To him we commit ourselves at all times, in life as in death. Thus the latter should give rise to neither rebellion nor anguish, as is shown by this beautiful midrash with which Christians cannot fail to identify:

> "Rabbi Meir, the Talmud records, lost both his sons on one day. It was on Sabbath afternoon, when he was in the House of Learning. His wife, the brilliant Beruria, did not on his return break the news to him, in order not to sadden his Sabbath-joy. She waited till the evening, and then tim-

idly approaching her husband she said: I have a question to ask of thee. Some time ago, a friend gave me some jewels to keep for him. Today he demands them back. What shall I do? I cannot understand thee asking such a question. Unhesitatingly thou shalt return the jewels. Thereupon she led him to the room where their children lay dead: These are the jewels I must return. Rabbi Meir could but sob forth the words of Job: The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken; blessed be the name of the Lord."[3]

Notes

1. Roman Missal, Canon 3 (Mass for the Dead).
2. Hertz J., ed., *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book,* Bloch Publishing Co., New York 1965, p. 270.
3. Ibid.

He Slept with His Fathers

Marie-Madeleine Jung

BIBLICAL VIEWPOINT

The formula used as a title is the one most often found in the Old Testament at the close of a man's life story. Whether kings *did what was pleasing to the Lord* or what was displeasing to him, *they slept with their fathers* when the hour came. It is worthwhile spending some time with this phrase, which is full of meaning and of both human and divine kindness.

It has been noted that the expression is only used after the time of Abraham, our father in faith. Before that, the genealogies in Genesis 1–11 say simply *He died*. The history of the people of God does not appear as yet in the successive generations which traverse recorded time. But after Abraham, the father of Israel, the fathers follow each other like links in a living chain. Those which have to take their place with their predecessors thus do so in a precise moment in the history of salvation. This link of flesh and spirit which has been their earthly life with all its vagaries, all the events which have shaped it, is now joined to the incarnated tradition of *his fathers*. Sometimes one finds a slight variation: *He was reunited with his ancestors* often crowns a happy old age, the *fulness of days* being a sign of blessing.

WHAT DID THIS FORM OF BURIAL MEAN FOR ISRAEL?

In its most immediate meaning: *You shall come to your grave in ripe old age, as a shock of grain comes up to the threshing floor* (Job

5:26). The distinction between body and soul is strange to the Hebrew mentality, and consequently death is not looked upon as a separation of the two. A living person is a *living soul* and a dead person is a *dead soul* (Num 6:6; Lev. 21:11). Death is not annihilation; as long as the body, or at least the skeleton remains, the soul is there, albeit in a very enfeebled state, as a shadow in the underworld of Sheol (Job 26:5; Is. 14:9; Ezek. 32:17).

These ideas justify the care taken of the corpse and the importance of giving it a decent burial, because the soul continues to feel what is happening to the body. Thus the worst of misfortunes is to be abandoned without burial, to be left a prey to the birds and the beasts of the field. (I Kings 14:11; Jer. 16:4)

The situation of the tomb was very important. The tomb belonged to the family, whether it was established on its own land (Jos. 24:30; I Sam. 25), or on a plot bought expressly for the purpose (Gen. 23). It was normal to be buried *in the tomb of his father* (Judg. 8:32; 16:31). It was an express desire (II Sam. 19:38) and David paid this last respect to the bones of Saul and his descendants. To be excluded from the family tomb was a punishment sent by God (I Kings 13). The expression: *to sleep with his fathers* and: *to be reunited with his own*, used in reference to the death of certain illustrious ancestors and of the kings of Judah and Israel, have perhaps a primitive explanation in the use of the family tomb, but they took on a broader meaning: they became a solemn formula signifying death, and they underlined the endurance of blood-ties beyond the grave.

Speaking of man en route for his eternal home, Koheleth reminds us: *the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it* (Eccles. 12:7). It needed the slow progress of Revelation to develop the idea of an immortality which would surpass the diminished existence of Sheol.

But biblical man was not alone in this arid waste of the afterlife. He found there solidarity with his family or with his race. He was part of a generation, of a wave of humanity linked with its predecessors; this is the meaning of the *toledoth* or genealogical tables which form the weft of the fabric of salvation history. At the head of the line, the ancestors are the fathers par excellence, those who contained within themselves the future of the race. If the patriarchs are *the fathers* of the chosen people, it is because of a spiritual as well as a

physical paternity, on account of the promises and the blessings given to them and passed on by them to their sons. The successive generations are defined by divine election.

Israel remembers the exploits of her ancestors: Before their fathers *God worked wonders* (Ps. 78:4). These wonders were not forgotten; they were passed on from father to son so that each one celebrated the God who brought his people out of Egypt. In sleeping with his fathers in the repose of God, each son of Israel brought a fresh stock of *wonders* to enhance the memorial of the Covenant and enrich the living memory of the chosen people. This is why the Wisdom writers like to sing the praises of their ancestors, making them pass before us one by one, bearing the judgment of tradition:

> Let us now praise famous men,
> and our fathers in their generations (Sir. 44:1).

There is also something else: this supreme union with their fathers went back to the divine fatherhood. Whether they called him El Shaddai, Elohim or YHWH, for the Israelites God was always *the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, the *God of our fathers*. It was his merciful love and faithfulness that the generations of the living rediscovered and perpetuated in themselves.

CHRISTIAN VIEWPOINT

When the *fullness of time* came in Christ we no longer find the traditional formula in the gospel: *He slept with his fathers*. The long chain of genealogy we find in Matthew had come to an end: *Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ* (Mt. 1:16).

In the new view of salvation, a man who had been saved would find his fathers not in the tomb but in the risen Christ. The image of the Old covenant brought us into the solidarity of the Kingdom, bound us to the family and to the communion of saints.

It is no longer question of an individual death, but of an event involving the whole Church. In each Christian who dies the whole body of Christ moves nearer to its fulfilment: it is not question of a single sheep being separated from the flock, but on the contrary of

one who enters the great sheepfold. Far from being still more isolated, those who die enter the life of the everlasting community. They are reunited with their own people, the people of the next world.

These *fathers* who await us, these are the loved ones who fell asleep in faith, called by the Father one by one to cross the threshold into eternity. They were taken from us in order to pass beyond the veil. We call to them in vain; they belong to another world. Silence is our only answer, but it is the silence of God. In the hope of rejoining them for all eternity, we follow them in mind and heart, and that part of ourselves which aspires to the Kingdom of Life is already with them.

When I fall asleep in the Repose of God, may it be with my fathers . . .

PART III

Sabbath and Sunday

A Case Study: Sabbath and Sunday

Eugene J. Fisher

It is important, in a more and more secularized society, to emphasize the social and religious values of the Sabbath and Sunday. This becomes particularly urgent when we begin to reflect on the role these traditional weekly holy days can (or at least should) play in the search for a more humane society, against the many de-humanizing tendencies of an increasingly industrialized and manipulated world. In fact, both days celebrate the relationship of humanity with God and with the creation we have received from the Lord, although Sunday is perhaps less explicit about the latter issue.

Rabbi Isidore Kahn, the Chief Rabbi of Naples, also teaches at the Italian Rabbinical College in Rome. Reverend Adrien Nocent, O.S.B., is the author of *Célébrer Jésus-Christ,* a seven-volume work on the liturgical year (Paris, 1975–77), published in English by St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota. The study of the history and the significance of the Sabbath and Sunday presented by both authors reflects the deeply human, social, and religious riches of these celebrations. It shows also the differences between the two: Sunday is first of all a memorial celebration of the resurrection of Christ; Sabbath a memorial of creation, of God as Creator, and humanity as co-creator. Yet, both days center on life, given by God and still to be realized and manifested in its fullness. Sabbath rest and Sunday rest, while related, are differently based and interpreted.

Professor David Flusser of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

and author of *Jesus* (New York, 1969) brings out the tensions between the two celebrations as they developed historically. Reverend Bernard Dupuy, O.P., director of the Centre d'études ISTINA in Paris, understands the Sabbath from a Christian point of view as embodying a demand for justice and human freedom.

Jewish Sabbath

Isidoro Kahn

"The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses, I have a precious gift in My treasure-house called the Sabbath, and I desire to give it to Israel; go and inform them." This is what the Talmud says (*Shabbat* 10b) about this original Jewish festive institution, unique of its kind.

According to Jewish tradition, the consecration of the seventh day of the week is as old as the world. In the Mosaic Law (Gen. 2:2–3), the distinction between the Sabbath and the days preceding it goes back to the moment when the Eternal completed the work of creation by blessing and sanctifying the seventh day. However, according to the teaching of Jewish mysticism (Zohar 1,75), the other days, even though they were created first, exist only in function of the Sabbath. What is more, in the mind of God both man and the Sabbath preceded creation and both complete it. The world exists because of man and the Sabbath.

What then does the Sabbath mean in the life of the people of Israel? It is the quintessence of all values, of all the ideals expressed and contained in the Torah. The values and ideals of the Torah are eternally valid and applicable to all ages and to all states of life. Millennia pass, generations come and go, conditions change, but the principles proclaimed by the Eternal remain ever the same. The institution of the Sabbath is an irrefutable proof of this.

Today man's control of nature is extending into exceptional areas of power. In scientific research and technological invention man is ever more aware of his ability to transform into concrete reality what a few years before had seemed a mere dream. Such extraordinary scientific and technological progress has not been ac-

companied by a corresponding progress in respect for human life and understanding of humanity. This striking advance in science and technology bears within itself two grave risks both of which threaten the present and the future of humanity.

The unlimited possibility that man discovers in his own potential to realize his desires, contributes inevitably to an increase of pride and a decrease of humility. For modern man the drama of the lost paradise of Adam in the Garden of Eden is substantially renewed. Today he tends to consider everything permissible, to feel that neither limit nor measure should be imposed on experimentation. This increased feeling of pride leads by its very nature to a diminution of religious sense. Aware of the amazing results achieved by his own technico-scientific power, modern man finds neither place nor time to listen to the call of religion. He no longer looks upon himself as a collaborator with God in the preservation of the order of the universe and in the work of creation which is daily renewed. On the contrary he tends to repudiate all dependence on God, and to proclaim himself his one and only master.

If the results of scientific-technical progress have not so far changed our world for the better, the reason is, in my opinion, the wrong use of the results already obtained and the precise objectives to which these results are put. From time immemorial man has possessed certain means of promoting life and he has created others. If it is forgotten that these means should always correspond with the aim of progress supported by man's intelligence and appreciation of moral values, his creative power will sooner or later become a destructive force. His creative genius will no longer serve to build a *mishkan*, a sanctuary, in the desert but to transform the earth into a desert, with all that it contains.

THE SABBATH: CELEBRATION OF GOD'S POWER

The prophetic spirit of the Bible anticipates time and offers the means of realizing this true progress in man and through man. The aim of the Sabbath is to show what should be the finality, the right orientation, the just use of man's scientific-technical progress.

The Sabbath is the answer to the disquieting questions: what is the use of creating life in the laboratory if it is daily trampled upon,

oppressed, desecrated and annihilated in the street? What is the use of inventing ways and means of alleviating man's fatigue if he continues to exploit beyond belief the labor of the many for the disproportionate enrichment of the few—if in this thermonuclear civilization, despite all its achievements there is no harmony among men, no serenity of soul?

The first and probably the most authentic meaning of the Sabbath abstention from work prescribed in the Torah (Ex. 20:8–12; Deut. 5:12–16) is this: to give man the opportunity of meditating on the essence and the meaning of life, on its limitations of time and space, limitations from which he does not escape and will never escape. Regularly every week, together with the reading from Genesis, the Sabbath gives herself to the believing Jew as a kind of appointment, a meeting between him and God. On the Sabbath he renounces for himself and his convenience the use of the aids and the products of his creative genius; he thus performs not only an act of devotion by recognizing God's absolute sovereignty over the whole universe, but also one of humility; he discovers a more just human dimension.

On the Sabbath the observant Jew stops to contemplate creation; he lives the day from a different viewpoint, and this fact makes it difficult for him not to encounter God. Hence, to observe the seventh day means to seek God, to celebrate his glory, his power, his love and his mercy.

All work stops on the Sabbath; we should try to relive the wonder that the first man surely felt before the marvels of heaven and earth, to discover in everything created the imprint of God's hand.

THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SABBATH

The second danger for our technical civilization begins when work becomes man's sole preoccupation and when he can no longer do without the elaborate products of this civilization.

"Six days you shall labour, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your man-servant, or your maid-servant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your

gates" (Ex. 20:8–10). The Sabbath is therefore based on the fundamental idea that work is a natural and sacred right of man; but after six days of assiduous toil a day of respite, of rest is necessary.

Thousands of years ago the Law of Moses proclaimed to all men without distinction this right to weekly rest. The exploitation to which slaves were submitted in ancient times and in not so ancient times is well known. Against this exploitation of man by man, Moses, for the first time in the history of civilization, rises and proclaims as law the principle that all living beings, animals included, must be treated humanely and with understanding. On the Sabbath at least workers, servants, dependents are no longer bound to submit to their employer and to their labor. On the Sabbath day, these people are once again their own masters because the dignity that follows from being a free creature is entirely restored to them. Those who for material interest hinder or refuse this weekly rest offend against all personal dignity and, as it were, refuse to be liberated from that slavery to which all the children of Israel were subjected in Egypt. Those who impede or refuse this weekly rest in the spirit in which it is prescribed by Divine Law, perpetuate, encourage and increase social inequality, materialistic concepts of life, disharmony among men, primacy of the material over the spiritual. However, it would be a mistake to understand the Sabbath as intended solely for recuperation of physical energy in order to bring renewed vigor to the weekly work. Work is the basis of the Sabbath only in the sense and in the measure in which it permits us to live better lives and to appreciate more fully the religious, social and human content of the *Shabbat.* Hence, the Sabbath does not exist for work; on the contrary, work exists for the Sabbath.

THE SABBATH DAY OF JOY AND DELIGHT

The Sabbath offers man the possibility, albeit by an act of faith, to put aside his work for one day so that it may not become a wearing grind impossible to halt, causing estrangement and neurosis. This in itself is already an extremely positive fact.

By forbidding the use of most instruments of our mechanized society, the Sabbath really succeeds in creating an authentic atmo-

sphere of tranquility, ease of spirit and relaxed nervous tension; this, from the psychophysical point of view, is a most important element.

That in a society inspired by the Torah the Sabbath guarantees a day of real rest to all without exception, is already an extraordinary social achievement; yet for the people of Israel the Sabbath means much more than this. To understand exactly what it does mean for them we must know the history of this people, its sufferings, its longings, its sorrows and its hopes.

Who knows? Perhaps at the dawn of its creation, perhaps later, but undoubtedly at a given moment in its three thousand-year-old history, the people of Israel created for itself this day so different from other days, this kind of rejoicing so spiritual, so often in contrast with the sadness of external reality. From that moment the people of Israel and the Sabbath began to walk together. From that moment their destinies have been interwoven. The Sages of old said: "The Sabbath has kept Israel more than Israel has kept the Sabbath." The truth is that here also the one exists in virtue of the other!

The Sabbath should be spent in joy, harmony and love because, as we read in Deutero-Isaiah 58:13–14, even in its scrupulous observance this day is a day of delight, delight which before all else both originates in God and flows back to him. The Sabbath should not however be a day of joy that finds its only meaning in God; it should be a day of joy, happiness and contentment for man also.

The Sabbath has been personified as a bride, and the people of Israel as her husband. The union of the spouses is one of joy and bliss, and the meeting between the believing Jew and the *Shabbat* should be the same. However, joy cannot co-exist with attitudes of discord, selfishness, oppression, destitution and discontent. Those therefore who would try to live the Sabbath in its true spirit must free themselves from all anxiety, all personal preoccupation, all enslavement to the pressing demands of daily life with its troubles and disappointments. It is certainly difficult to achieve all this, but not impossible! The numberless Jews segregated in ghettos during the dark centuries of the dispersion succeeded.

In the *Romanzero* written by the famous German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine in 1851 there is among the Jewish melodies a song called "Princess Sabbath". In the first seven verses of this song the

poet describes in a wonderful way the marvellous change that takes place in a poor ragged Jew at the approach of Friday night. During the rest of the week he is a destitute beggar, sad, starving, wounded and distressed, but now, on the Sabbath, he feels happy, pleased to be alive, to see the Sabbath lamps lighted, the table covered with a white cloth, to sit down with his wife and his daughter to eat the Sabbath fish in garlic sauce; these could certainly not be considered great beauties but they are everything to him.

In conclusion, both body and soul must share in the joy of the Sabbath.

THE SABBATH, SYMBOL OF MESSIANIC TIMES

Thus the Sabbath always succeeds in bringing into the life of the observant Jew the fragrance of a different way of living, of a different conception of life, the fragrance of a world mid-way between the world of things and that of the spirit. For this reason the Sabbath has become a kind of ring uniting two worlds, the present and the future: the present with all its competition and rivalry, its fear and anxiety, its contrast and contradiction; and the future, the messianic times which will be completely *kullo Shabbat*, eternally Sabbath, that is, founded on peace, on love, and on universal harmony.

The Jewish Sabbath is transformed into the vigil of the day that is "all Sabbath", that is to say, into a means of realizing the messianic expectation, in so far as observance of the day that is a seventh part of the whole life of man succeeds in rousing religious sense, rekindling family love, renewing and reinforcing in each individual the duty of uniting himself with all those who combat social inequality, the false idols of our times, and who instead sustain the struggle of good against evil, justice against iniquity, freedom against intolerance and discrimination.

On the Sabbath feast, therefore, Israel's ancient faith in the universal messianic time, in the age-old optimism with which she has always looked upon man, recognizing his capacity and willingness to understand his fellow-men, is renewed. It is written at the beginning of Genesis that all men are *benei Adam*, sons of the one man, Adam; does this not necessarily mean that when we look around us we should recognize all men as our brothers? This is the foundation of

the messianic concept. These are the feelings with which the believing Jew welcomes the Sabbath into his life and into his home.

THE SABBATH IN THE LIFE OF A JEW OF TODAY

But how are these values of which the Sabbath acts as ambassador translated concretely into the life of the observant Jew of our time? How is the Sabbath spent and lived in a real Jewish home?

The Sabbath, as we know, begins on Friday before sunset and ends on Saturday when the stars come out; but the preparations in fact begin a long time before, in the morning, sometimes even on the vigil. Moreover, during the course of the week, activities are arranged so that people can be free on the Sabbath. Sometimes arrangements are made with employers for extra working time to be put in during the week so as to have Saturday off.

The *Shabbat* is mainly spent at home with the family. Here from the early hours of the morning, especially in winter, there is an excited bustle, an impatience for the arrival of this weekly event, unique and absolutely binding. The home should be made as welcoming as possible in honor of the feast. Everything is specially cleaned, the linen changed; new things are used for the first time. Food for the special Sabbath dishes and those that are particular favorites is bought and cooked early. In addition, dispensing with servants and waiters, the Jewish literary precept in Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* (Halakhot Shabbat 30, 7) strongly urges everybody to share personally in the preparations for the Sabbath. It is, for example, considered equivalent to a real and profound religious act for the wife to make and bake the two special Sabbath loaves, *ḥallot,* to decorate the house with flowers, to prepare biscuits, sweets and other kinds of pastries. Fasting is forbidden on the Sabbath; on the contrary, it is obligatory to have three meals. One must therefore provide for the poor, foreigners and those travellers who stop to spend the Sabbath in our city. To help the poor is called in Hebrew *ẓedakah,* a term which expresses more than a gesture of almsgiving; it means an act of social justice. If, at the individual level, the *ẓedakah* is generally an initiative entrusted to personal generosity, to perform the *ẓedakah* on the Sabbath is a clear duty which no one can refuse.

When finally all preparations are completed and the dining

room table is covered with a gleaming white cloth, freshly laundered, on which are the wine glasses and the two loaves for *kiddush,* the sanctification of the feast, the mistress of the house gives the signal for the beginning of the day of rest by lighting the candle and reciting the appropriate blessing. Then comes the departure for the synagogue in good time so as to join the chorus of those greeting the Sabbath with the ancient hymn of Solomon ha-Levi Alkabeẓ, the well-known *Lekha dodi likrat kallah peney shabbat nekabelah ki hi mekor ha-berakhah* ("Come my beloved with chorus of praise, welcome Bride Sabbath the Queen of the days" [transl. Hertz, *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book*]).

Peace does not reign in the world, people are torn with internal struggle which expresses itself in all the exasperation, injustice and social inequality. As we read in the account of the paschal night, the *Haggadah,* there is no generation in which frequent recurrence of gratuitous anti-Semitism has not masked the ills of society. During the whole of the week the Jew can only hope for the redemption of the world, but according to the teaching of our talmudic masters (*Beẓah* 16a), when the Sabbath comes there is another soul united with his bringing as a gift the perfume of a world already redeemed through man himself. At the end of the evening prayer all hasten to return home for *kiddush.* At the festive table an ancient chant is sung, *Shalom aleikhem malakhei ha-sharet,* welcoming the angels of the Most High who, according to a legend in the Talmud (*Shabbat* 119b) enter the home on the Sabbath, accept greetings and express the wish that all succeeding Sabbaths will be as happy.

After this hymn the father or husband intones the last chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon which begins with the words: *Eshet hail mi imẓa verahok mipeninim mikhrah* ("A good wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels" [Prov. 31:10]). In the book of Proverbs this verse is meant to praise the woman rich in domestic virtues. On Friday evening while all the family is united round the table it is intended to be simply a song expressing the love that the husband, regardless of age, renews with his life's companion, a song that exalts the love uniting them, love that can transfigure every human reaction.

The cup is filled and the blessing over the wine recited, then wine is poured out for all to drink in order of age. The little embroidered cloth covering the Sabbath bread in memory of the manna,

symbol of God's providence, is removed, and portions of the blessed bread are distributed. Finally the father blesses his family.

At this moment life should be suffused with an atmosphere of serenity, and each person should try to soften all feelings of passion and impatience that may arise. As they chatter and sing, parents and children are together in this inimitable but so very necessary oasis of peace and mystical rest on the dark and tossing ocean of daily life.

On the morning of the next day, Saturday, the family goes to the synagogue for the religious service of the day. After this, and eventually after the meal, visits to the sick, the lonely and the suffering are strongly recommended so as to bring them words of comfort and the presence of a friend.

Time passes inexorably and soon this enchanting day fades into the first stars of evening. There is a note of sad regret in the *Havdalah* with which we bid farewell to the Sabbath.

Already the new day has begun, the first of our six working days, but the memory of the Sabbath should be an inspiration for our lives during the course of the week, because the sanctification of the Sabbath would be useless if during the other days, as we look about us, we did not recognize our fellowmen as brothers. The sanctification of the seventh day would be useless if we were not convinced, if we failed to realize, that we are here to help one another, to respect one another and walk the paths of this world together.

Christian Sunday

Adrien Nocent, O.S.B.

Many Christians should read Rabbi Kahn's excellent article on the biblical theology of the Sabbath. Sometimes all we Christians remember about the Sabbath are its legal prescriptions, which often surprise us because we fail to realize their aim: to safeguard the whole dynamic of that day which transcends the synagogue service and respect for rest, and issues into contemplation of God, family prayer, understanding of the disinherited and of the suffering. I am afraid that what we often look upon as external legalism has changed sides; we have to admit that for most Christians Sunday is characterized above all by abstention from real work and by the obligation of attending the Eucharistic celebration. As far as can be seen, this celebration has no precise connection with Sunday itself.

It is not only Christians of a relative religious culture and hence with marginal knowledge of the implications of Sunday who sometimes wonder if it is really necessary to keep to it as a day of celebration, but also others who consider themselves more in touch with the world of today. Because the Church celebrates the Eucharist on week-days, though with less solemnity, they are considering the possibility of choosing some other day to celebrate the Lord. Here we face a problem analogous to that of the date of Easter, which is, for some people, secondary and of little importance.

We are, then, confronted with a double problem: historical—how was Sunday constituted, and theological—what is the "sacramental" meaning of Sunday, that is, the meaning that actualizes the mystery it celebrates.[1]

AN HISTORICAL PROBLEM

How did Christians organize Sunday, and what did they intend to celebrate? Before answering this question it must be understood that when Christianity was developing there were three different ways of organizing the week.

In Greek culture the days of the week were named after the planets Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn, a usage retained in some European languages. Sunday took its name from the sun, and Monday from the moon. This planetary week became increasingly general though certainly never official. There was a popular belief in the influence of the planet of the day no man's conduct, a belief which in fact still persists. It has been remarked that because they kept the Sabbath Jews were thought to adore Saturn, just as Christians because they kept Sunday were thought to adore the sun. The spread of Christianity did not completely succeed in imposing the name *Dominicalis dies;* the Germanic languages still use the name of the planet: *Sunday, Sonntag, Zondag.*

I do not intend to talk about the Jewish week nor about the Sabbath which characterized Judaism from the beginning. I wish simply to recall the fact that when Christianity centered its celebration on Sunday, it did not re-name the other days of the week, nor did Judaism do this when it centered its celebration on the Sabbath. The Jews had *Shabbat,* then the first day, second day, third, fourth, fifth and sixth days. For Christians, Sunday (the first day) was followed by ferias two, three, four, five, six and *sabbato.* Notice that they kept the name *sabbato* for Saturday. I shall not discuss the development of the Sabbath. I wish only to recall the fact that its role became more important after the Babylonian exile. After the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, the synagogue service was substituted for the sacrifices. This synagogue service, which became increasingly important, gave the Jews of the Diaspora a deep feeling of belonging to a community. It was precisely because they were dispersed among pagans that they had to re-affirm their observance of the Sabbath. This observance was a protection and a visible witness to their fidelity and to the vitality of their membership in a community.

A THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM

As we shall see, the theological problem is related at least partially to an historical problem, but it seems preferable to proceed without further delay to a theological examination of the points already noted.

Before touching on a theology of Sunday we must examine the attitude of Jesus with regard to the Sabbath and the reaction of the first Christian community.

Jesus' thought is not all that simple to analyse, and it must be remembered that it has many different shades of meaning. Here we can attempt only a short synthesis in which to present the chief elements; the synthetic presentation must not, however, add to them undue weight. What is certain is that Jesus never attacks the principle of Divine Law in relation to the Sabbath. It can be affirmed that when he criticizes merely external observance he is in line with the Sabbath law. We have been reminded in the preceding article of the conditions requisite for the interiorization of the Sabbath if it is to be authentic. Thus Jesus, by criticizing purely external observance, was in reality stressing the ideal of authenticity in its celebration.

The profound attitude of Jesus is expressed when he insistently affirms: "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath" (Mark 2:27–28). To see in this affirmation contempt for the Law and any intention of abolishing it would be to misinterpret Jesus' thought. He knew Scripture, hence the account in Genesis 2:3; he experienced the weekly interruption of labor, the halt that gives rhythm to man's work and at the same time stresses his true destiny: adoration of his God. In breaking the Sabbath, as he did on several occasions, Jesus was not innovating; his behavior has precedent in Judaism. When Mattathias renewed the attack on the Sabbath day itself (1 Macc. 2:39–41), it was not from contempt of the law of rest, which was binding on the army as much as on everybody else (1 Macc. 9:43–47; 2 Macc. 8:26–28; 12:38). Precisely because he held the Sabbath and the Law in such high esteem he was certain that by putting the saving of the nation before literal observance of the precepts he was acting according to their spirit. Moreover the gospel itself mentions certain circumstances in which Sabbath observance may be infringed. We have just

seen that Mattathias chose to save the nation by transgressing the letter of Sabbath observance. Jesus recalls that the Sabbath rest is subordinate to the good of humanity and he cites the prophet Hosea: "I want mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. 12:7; Hos. 6:6). In what concerns cult and ritual the priests themselves sometimes have to do hard work on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:4–6), and circumcision is performed on that day (Jn. 7:23). Finally, certain customs are mentioned in the gospel, as for example watering beasts on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:9–12; Luke 13:12–16; 14:5).

In reality Jesus respects the Sabbath, but he understands how to appreciate the different ways of observing the sabbatical rest. There are serious philanthropic motives that modify this observance. For Jesus, as for all Jews, the most important duty of the Sabbath is to bless the Lord and to strive to sanctify the day. We must however go further when we examine the reactions of Jesus. In breaking the Sabbath, the solacing of human suffering was not his only motive, he had another: the affirmation of his messianic power. In what he does there is promise of the eternal Sabbath. "The Son of man is lord even of the sabbath" (Mark 2:27–28).

After Jesus' life on earth was over, what was the reaction of the Christian community to the Sabbath? We have late evidence from outside the community. The historian Eusebius writes: "They kept the Sabbath and observed the other practices like the Jews; but they celebrated Sunday in memory of the resurrection almost as we do."[2] This evidence then suggests a juxtaposition without conflict. St. Matthew's gospel which belongs to this Jewish-Christian milieu says, speaking of the end of time: "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath." (Note that in the parallel text of St. Mark this reference to the Sabbath is missing [Matt. 24:20–21; Mark 13:18]).

However, this situation did not last and the first difficulties arose between Stephen and the "hellenists"; they are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles: "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us" (Acts 6:13–14). Although there is no evident opposition, St. Paul affirms the liberty of the Christian with regard to the Sabbath in the new communities founded by him (Gal. 4:8–11;

Col. 2:6–17). However, even in the pagano-Christian church there are judaizing tendencies and a desire to observe the Sabbath as well as Sunday (Gal. 4:8–11). In early post-apostolic times there were groups of pagano-Christians who wanted to observe the Sabbath, as is proved by the letter of St. Ignatius of Antioch to the Magnesians,[3] yet the pagano-Christian church did not avoid polemics in its desire to defend its independence of the Sabbath.[4] A critical study of the *Constitutiones apostolorum* has made it possible to prove some Christian groups experienced a certain revival of the desire to observe the Sabbath. This document, written at the end of the fourth century and compiled in Syria, contains passages in which this tendency and its significance are very clearly mentioned. In the Sabbath both the burial of Christ and the link with creation can be discerned, while the Lord's day celebrates the resurrection.[5] However, it has been demonstrated that these passages are interpolations introduced into the text from the *Didascalia apostolorum*, a Syrian work of the third century which treats only of Sunday celebrations.[6]

A THEOLOGY OF SUNDAY

How was the Christian Sunday organized? It is here that the theological position of Sunday with regard to the Sabbath becomes clear. That the Christian liturgy of the Word and the Eucharistic liturgy have their source in Jewish practice is so obvious that today we can still recognize traces of Jewish customs; but nevertheless it must be clearly affirmed that there is no connection between Sunday and the Sabbath. Sunday is in no way a Saturday transposed to Sunday. The theological orientation of Sunday is entirely different from that of the Sabbath. When Sunday is compared with the Sabbath at this period of the primitive Church it is solely for reasons of anti-Jewish polemic or to attack the Judeo-Christians. However, arguments in favor of celebrating Sunday to the exclusion of the Sabbath are not easy to find. Christ did not in fact say anything on this subject. The *Epistle of Barnabas* tries to find scripture texts to prove the superiority of Sunday over Saturday[7] but without success.

Is it possible to explain the origin of the celebration of the *Dominicalis dies* in the first Christian community? It seems that this

can be done, though all the elements are not as obvious as we would like them to be.

Some have tried to prove that the origin of the Sunday celebration was purely practical with no theological intention. The Christians assembled on Saturday evening after the synagogue service; but Saturday evening already belongs to the following day. When the resurrection of Christ on Sunday morning was stressed, the meeting was transferred to that time. Here there is no question of a thesis but of a pure hypothesis without any real foundation. In reality we possess only one text in favor of an evening celebration, but the evening is that of Sunday (Acts 20:6–11).[8] On the contrary, many of the arguments are in favor of choosing Sunday for the celebration. Jesus rose on Sunday morning. We have two accounts of his appearing on Sunday evening: first to the disciples of Emmaus (Luke 24:28–43), then to the apostle Thomas (John 20:19–20, 24, 26). Immediately after the apparition to the disciples of Emmaus he appeared to the apostles in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36). The apparition which was to confirm the faith of Thomas also took place on a Sunday, eight days afterwards (Mark 16:14–18; Luke 24:36–49; John 20:24–29). Allusions to the Eucharist are found in the accounts of Jesus' resurrection: bread, fish (Luke 24:30–35, 41–43; John 21:9–14). During the forty days after Easter Christ appeared to his disciples and ate with them (Acts 1:3ff.). From a letter of Pliny to Trajan, it seems that the Christians met on Sunday before sunrise to sing hymns to Christ as to a god; they then parted and met again to eat a simple meal together. These meetings took place on a *statuto die,* probably Sunday.[9]

It cannot be doubted that the Christians intended to celebrate Sunday. The pagano-Christian communities give proof that they met on Sunday. St. Paul fixes Sunday, the first day of the week, for the Corinthians to make their collection for Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:2). In the Acts we find the Christians meeting on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). The Apocalypse uses the expression "the Lord's day" to designate the day on which John fell into an ecstasy. From the texts we have seen which describe the apparitions of Christ and his meals with his disciples, it seems obvious that the primitive churches celebrated Sunday.

The theology of their celebrations is immediately obvious; it has

nothing to do with the Sabbath, being entirely christological and sacramental. In the texts referred to there is question neither of rest nor of Sabbath. All is recounted and lived with reference to the risen Christ. The Sunday celebration is clearly independent of that of the Sabbath and, at the time, had no theological link with it. Its aim was to celebrate Christ who rose on Sunday morning.

This celebration is also sacramental, that is to say, the actualization of a past event in the present for the future. Here the primitive Church is in syntony with Judaism in which celebration is also the actualization of a past event for the future. However, the object of this celebration is absolutely foreign to Judaism, since its aim is to actualize Christ's resurrection on Sunday, the day of the resurrection. Sunday thus acquires a very special quasi-sacramental value. This actualization of Christ's resurrection is also an anticipation of his return, a reaching towards the Parousia.

This is why the Christian Sunday is characterized by the re-enaction of the Last Supper, a re-enaction which is both an actualization of the mystery of Easter and a journey to the Last Day. Note the parallel between the expressions *Kiriakon deipnon*, the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:20), and *Kiriakè èmèra*, the Day of the Lord (Rev. 1:10).

When St. Justin wrote his *Apologia* to Antoninus Pius in 150, the Sunday eucharistic celebration was held in the morning.[10] There are some who think it possible that the eucharistic celebration was first held regularly in the evening as happened at least once at Troas (Acts 20:7); this could be hypothetically confirmed in the letter of Pliny to Trajan where a second Sunday gathering for the Eucharist is mentioned. The Christians abandoned meetings at this time after the interdiction imposed on them by Pliny.[11]

We have already stressed the fact that no mention of Sunday rest can be found in the texts. We know that neither the Greeks nor the Romans had a weekly free day until Constantine introduced the Sunday rest in 351. The Jews alone abstained from work on the Sabbath. Until the middle of the fourth century, the Christians were obliged to work every Sunday; but at the same time they kept firmly to their Sunday eucharistic celebration which was linked to the resurrection of the Lord. In spite of the difficulty of holding a celebration on a working day the Christians held absolutely to meeting on Sunday, and on Sunday only, in order to hear the Word of God and to

celebrate the Eucharist. The Sunday rest was so entirely absent from Christian preoccupation that its introduction by Constantine presented the Church with a new pastoral problem: what were Christians to do on Sunday, because idleness can be harmful. True rest was therefore stressed, rest which consists in life lived according to God. Ephraem the Syrian writes somewhat crudely: ". . . we stop cultivating our fields and interrupt our labor but we work ardently for our perdition by frequenting taverns and houses of ill repute. Work puts an end to the sinning indulged in during leisure. Do not therefore honor the day of rest with your body alone . . ."[12] St. Benedict of Nursia in the monastic rule writes: "On the Lord's day all (the monks) will give time to reading except those who have been designated for special services. If a brother is so negligent and lazy that he will neither read nor meditate, or if he is incapable of these things, he will be given some kind of work so as not to be idle."[13]

Rest was not, therefore, essential to the Christian Sunday; it was an accidental addition. Christians had to be progressively educated to living it, and the Fathers used the Old Testament for this purpose, thus contributing to the special symbolism given to Sunday. From this time Sabbath and Sunday, which hitherto had no profound link, began to be intimately associated, and the theology of the Sabbath as we have exposed it here fused with the theology peculiar to the Christian Sunday. Time, however, was needed to reach this point. The *Didascalia apostolorum* proposes a theology of Sunday supported by the Old Testament, but it is vigorously opposed to the weekly rest because it was not observed by the patriarchs and because God never rests. However, Sunday as the first day is the anniversary of the creation of the world.[14] A sermon of Eusebius of Alexandria in the fifth century establishes the link between the first day of creation and the resurrection.

> The holy day of the Lord is therefore a memorial of the Lord. It was called the Lord's day because it is lord of the other days. Before the Lord's passion it was not called the Lord's day but the first day. On that day the Lord truly established the basis of creation because on that day he gave the world the first fruits of his resurrection; on that day, as we have said, he commanded the sacred mysteries

> to be celebrated. For us therefore this particular day is the source of all benefits; it is the beginning of creation, of the resurrection, of the week. Since it has in itself three beginnings, this day bears an allusion to the most Holy Trinity.[15]

Christian hymnography of the Middle Ages was to include the following hymn in the Sunday office of Lauds; it is still used today:

> Primo die quo Trinitas
> Beata mundum condidit
> Vel quo resurgens Conditor
> Nos morte victa liberat.

This juxtaposition of the first day as a memorial of the first creation and of the resurrection of Christ gave rise to another symbol, that of the eighth day. We already find this in the first letter of Peter (1 Peter 3:20) and also in Justin,[16] but it shows a strongly marked development from the fourth century. St. Basil in his *De Spiritu Sancto* gives his understanding of the ogdoad:

> On the first day of the week we pray standing but we do not all know why. It is not only because 'risen'[17] with Christ and obliged to seek the things that are above, by standing for prayer on this day consecrated to the resurrection we call to mind the grace given to us; but also because this day seems, as it were, the image of the world to come.[18]

The theme of the eighth day, even though this name was never officially used to designate Sunday, has had a very rich development. It has affected even architecture, since octagonal baptisteries were inspired by it through the first letter of Peter and through the eighth day, symbol of the life to come. This symbolic theology of the ogdoad should be developed but this is not the place to do it.

As a short résumé of what has been said in this basic presentation we shall mention the following four points:

1. In both its sacramental usage and its euchology, Christianity depends more often than not on Judaism. This is true both for the

liturgy of the Word and for the liturgy of the Eucharist. The institution of the Sunday celebration is radically independent of Judaism and can in no way be connected with it. What is celebrated is Christ's resurrection on the first day of the week, because according to the evangelists and the apostles who witnessed his apparitions, he rose from the dead on that day.

2. The Sunday celebration has no link with the biblical theology of rest. This was an accidental association dating from 351 when Constantine ordained that Sunday should be a day of rest for all.
3. From that time a theology of rest according to the Bible and to Judaism was superimposed on the celebration of Sunday. The Sunday celebrated before all else the resurrection, through the Eucharist which itself is clearly connected with those apparitions of the risen Christ during which he ate with his disciples.
4. From the fourth century there begins a theology of Sunday as the first day, that of creation, and at the same time of the eighth day, that of the Parousia.

Notes

1. Several studies on the problem of Sunday have been published; the following are the most accessible. *Le Dimanche* (*"Lex Orandi" 39*), by various authors, Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1965. An interesting bibliography is appended. For texts relative to Sunday see: W. Rordorf, *Sabbat et dimanche dans l'Eglise ancienne* (*"Traditio Christiana"* 2), Neuchatel, Delachaux et Niestle, 1972 (first published in Germany by Theologischer Verlag Zurich under the title *Sabbat und Sonntag in der Alten Kirche*), a collection of basic texts classified and numbered. The same author, on whom we have drawn, has written *Der Sonntag. Geschichte des Rubeund Gottesdiensttages im altesten Christum,* Zurich, Zwingliverlag, 1962. J. Danielou, *Bible et Liturgie* (*"Lex Orandi"* 11), Parish, Editions du Cerf, 1950, has two chapters on Sunday according to the Fathers and on the eighth day. M. Searle, *Sunday Morning: A Time for Worship,* Collegeville 1982—A. M. Altermatt. Th. A. Schnitker—W. Heim. *Der Sonntag -Anspruch-Wirklichkeit-Gestalt,* Wurzburg, 1986. See also: M. Rooney, *La Domenica, in Amemnesis,* Vol. 6 *l'Anno Liturgic,* pp. 67–91. Marietti 1988.

2. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III, 27, 2–5 (p. 22 No. 13). Pages and numbers refer to the more readily accessible collection by Rordorf, *Sabbat et dimanche dans l'Eglise ancienne*, Delachaux et Nieste, 1972), which presents the texts in their original language accompanied by French translation.
3. Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistula ad Magnesios*, 9, 1–2 (p. 134 No. 78). In this text Ignatius is alluding to some Judeo-Christians who have given up Sabbath observance.
4. Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudeo*, 47, 1–4 (p. 40 No. 23).
5. *Constitutiones apostolorum*, VII, 23, 4: VIII, 33, 1 (p. 100 No. 58). This study is by Th. Zahn, *Geschichte des Sonntags vornehmlich in der alten Kirche*, Hannover, 1878.
6. *Didascalia apostolorum*, II, 59, 2–3; III, 6,5; V, 20, 11; VI, 18 etc. (pp. 168ff Nos. 102–105).
7. Barnabas, *Epistula*, 15, 1–9 (p. 26 No. 15).
8. This thesis is already old: H. Dumaine, "Dimanche", *Le Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, V, 1, column 900. In 1959, H. Riesenfeld, "Sabbat et jour du Seigneur", *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of T.W. Manson*. See also: E. Dekkers, "L'Eglise ancienne a-t-elle connu la messe du soir?" in *Miscellanea in honorem L.C. Mohlberg*, I, 1948, pp. 233 ff; *Sacris Erudiri*, 7, 1955, pp. 99ff.
9. Pliny the Younger, *Epistula* (ad Traianum) X, 96, 7 (p. 136 No. 79).
10. Justin, *Apologia* (*I*), 67, 3–7 (p. 136 No. 80).
11. See note 9.
12. Ephraem the Syrian, *Sermo ad nocturnum dominicae resurrectionis*, 4 (p. 184 No. 116).
13. Benedict of Nursia, *Regula Monasteriorum*, 48, 22–23 (p. 220 No. 137).
14. *Didascalia apostolorum*, VI, 18, 11–15 (pp. 170ff No. 105).
15. Eusebius of Alexandria, *Sermones*, 16 [On the day of the Lord] (p. 208 No. 135). For the creation of the world on the first day and the resurrection, see also Justin, *Apologia* (*I*), 67, 7 (p. 140 No. 80).
16. Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudeo*, 41, 4 (p. 140 No. 81). See also *Didascalia apostolorum*, VI, 18, 15 (p. 172 No. 105): "If Saturday is added to the week, there are eight days; the week

prevails over the Saturday and gives the first day of the week." By counting the first and the last days of the week there are eight days; thus Sunday is indicated.

17. "risen": there is a play on words here; *anistastai* signifies "to stand erect" and also "to raise up".
18. Basil the Great, *De Spiritu Sancto*, 27, 67 (p. 188 No. 120).

Tensions Between Sabbath and Sunday

David Flusser

On Sabbath morning the Jews say in their synagogues: "And thou didst not give it (the Sabbath), O Lord our God, unto the nations of other lands, nor didst thou, O our King, make it the heritage of worshippers of idols, nor do the uncircumcised dwell in its rest: but unto thy people Israel thou didst give it in love, unto the seed of Jacob whom thou didst choose." This is a poetical expression of the concept that the Sabbath was given as a gracious gift to the children of Israel: only they are obliged to observe it, since the Gentiles, according to Judaism, are free from the yoke of the Mosaic Law. If they live a moral life and are not idolatrous, they will be saved. This concept was, as is known, accepted by the apostolic Christian community of Jerusalem. The difference between Paul and Peter was that Peter saw in the apostolic decree a minimum of demands and Paul, on the other hand, saw in those precepts the maximum of what the Gentiles had to observe. Later, in the Middle Ages, by a parallel development, Jewish *halakhah* reached the same position as Paul: it became forbidden to the Gentiles to observe the Jewish law. The first saying hinting in this direction is that of Rabbi Johanan (250 C.E.), according to whom it is forbidden to a Gentile to observe the Sabbath.

Thus, from the point of view of abstract dogmatics the situation is more or less clear, and Jewish and Christian positions are similar. Paul's special position about the very nature of holiness did not play a special role in Christian wrestling with the problem of the Sabbath and with the changing shape of the content of Sunday. Paul's opinion about the indifference of the holy days themselves and of the importance of man's intention is expressed in Romans 14:5–6: "One man

esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike. Let every one be fully convinced in his own mind." This is not exactly the opinion of the Church about Sunday and Christian feasts. Though Paul's invective against the Galatians is also based upon theological positions which could have weakened the importance of Sunday and Christian feasts, the passage still had some influence upon Christian polemics against Judaizers: ". . . how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days, and months, and seasons, and years! I am afraid I have laboured over you in vain" (Gal. 4:9–11). Here Paul hints at the Jewish religious calendar, but the Sabbath is not expressly named. The only explicit mention of the Sabbath in this context in the New Testament is in Colossians 2:16: "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath."

The problem of Sabbath and Sunday, and the tensions between these days in Christian thought, would not arise, as far as we can see, if Christianity had risen and developed not in this concrete world but in the abstract world of ideas. According to both Judaism and the original plan of Christianity, as expressed in the apostolic decree, God-fearing Gentiles are free from the Law, and the Sabbath was not given to them. But how can Christianity enjoy the achievements of Judaism and of the Old Testament? This problem is even more burning because almost all trends of Christianity see in their religion not a break with the mother-religion, but its better continuation, and the Old Testament—which contains the sanctification of the Sabbath—is the holy book of Christianity. Somehow, Christianity not only wants to enjoy the achievements of the religion of Israel, but it has also to solve the problem of its obligations towards Judaism stemming from the Jewish origin of Christianity and its acceptance of the Old Testament. This typically Christian attitude towards Judaism is clearly reflected in Christian evaluation of the seventh day of the week, Sabbath or Sunday.

It was clear from the beginning that the Sabbath could not be accepted as a Christian holiday, as it was—and is—one of the central phenomena of the Jewish "legalism", and it is even astonishing how frequently it was partially observed by Christians in the fourth cen-

tury. One of the reasons is that the precept of the Sabbath is contained in the decalogue, which was seen by the Church as the natural law which could not be abolished by the coming of Christ. And there is no difficulty for Christianity in accepting the decalogue verbally—with the exception of the precept of the Sabbath. Jesus' Sabbath controversies in the Gospels were understood as if he had abolished the legal aspect of the Sabbath: on the other hand, Church authors acted in connection with the Sabbath as they used to do with many other Jewish precepts. This procedure is commonly called typological explanation; it can also be called sublimation, from the psychological point of view, or even spiritualization. Even if this kind of reevaluation of the Sabbath precept was often combined with unjust and erroneous reproaches against the "fleshly" and unworthy nature of the Jewish Sabbath, Christian spiritualization of the concept of the Sabbath in the old patristic literature is sometimes sublime, and even those Jews who observe the Sabbath according to the letter, can find new inspiration for their own religion in patristic concepts of the spiritual meaning of the seventh day.

In the whole development it is interesting to notice that the very observance of the Sabbath by the Jews was, as far as I can see, less attacked by Christian theoreticians than Jewish observance of other commandments—until the time when Sunday became in its structure the substitute for the Jewish Sabbath. Only then it became strictly forbidden to Christians to observe the Sabbath, and Jews who were converted by force to Christianity were executed by the Inquisition in Spain when it was discovered that they observed, even partially, the Sabbath. The Sabbath could not be completely opposed as long as a Christian predilection for this day existed in wide circles, and this predilection existed as long as the Sunday had not taken on many of the characteristics of the Sabbath.

What is the origin of the Christian Sunday? The notion of the week in later antiquity expanded from the Orient not only through the Jews. In this oriental week the individual days were consecrated to certain heavenly bodies, until today in European languages the days bear the names of their gods, a usage against which the Church protested in vain. Sometimes, in the Christian era, Thursday was a holy day, because it was dedicated to Jupiter. So it is probable that Sunday could be more easily accepted because the Invincible Sun

was the main god of the Roman Empire. Even Constantine revered this god before he became converted to Christianity, and he was also the emperor who promoted the first law of Sunday, the day of the sun.

But the pagan component, while corroborating in some measure the acceptance of Sunday, was not the main cause of the origin of Sunday. Nor was this a tendency to find another day which should abrogate the Jewish Sabbath; we have seen that at the beginning, the importance of the Sabbath was not completely abolished. Sunday is the day of the Lord's resurrection, and this became a very important component of the Christian Sunday. But I do not believe that this fact gave birth to the Christian Sunday, a feast which repeats itself all seven days. It is far more probable that the origin of Sunday dates from the very beginning of Christianity, when the Christians were Jews and visited the synagogue on the Sabbath; the following day was thus a natural candidate for becoming a proper day for the new community, and this assumption was already suggested. Paul writes to the Christians of Corinth (I Cor. 16:1–2): "Now concerning the contribution for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week [day after the Sabbath] each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper . . ." It seems that the Jewish background of this arrangement is clear enough. And so Sunday became a special day for Christians, as the Sabbath was the Jewish feast.

Already in the legislation of Constantine, Sunday became a free day, but all work was not forbidden. The special aim was that Sunday was to be a holiday, devoted to God and to the service in the churches, and this is its main meaning until today. But already in the early Middle Ages Sunday was more assimilated to the Jewish Sabbath; many kinds of work were forbidden on Sunday and transgressions were punished. This severe rule exists in places up till today. This is not always caused especially by a "legalistic" approach to the character of Sunday. If Sunday is a day of rest, then disciplinary regulations cannot be avoided.

We have already said that the partial assimilation of Sunday to the Sabbath caused Sunday to become a surrogate for the Sabbath, and only then was the Sabbath seen as a day which had nothing to do with Christianity. At the second Council of Nicaea in 787 it was

decided that Jewish Christians who secretly observed the Sabbath and other Jewish precepts were not to be accepted into the community of the Church, and their children were not to be baptized until they renounced their Jewish way of life. So Sunday completely superseded the Jewish Sabbath.

In speaking about the tensions between Sabbath and Sunday, one point at least should be stressed, namely, the social aspect of the Sabbath. This is very clearly present in the Old Testament. It is one of the characteristics of divine revelation and of the gracious gifts of God that the social importance of the Sabbath is only one side of its value; its main task is to consecrate to holiness one day in the week, the day which symbolizes the rest of God after creation. Thus the Sabbath surpasses social legislation, and even the social side of the Sabbath was revealed at a time when—it seems to me—such a social institution cannot be explained as a human response to the social needs of that ancient period. It is the very nature of divine revelation to be wiser than the men who receive it. Only in our modern time can we fully appreciate the social importance of the Sabbath and of Sunday. This secular side of the divine institution is so evident that today, in many countries, Friday has become the day of rest for Muslims, from Israel to India, although according to the Koran Friday is the day of prayers and not the day of rest, and this is said by Mohammed himself clearly enough. So the history of the Sunday rest from the legislation of Constantine until today does not imply a Judaization of the Church, and it is not a mere coincidence that Sunday is both the day of public rest and the day of services in the churches.

At the beginning we spoke about the original plan of Christianity which is identical with the common Jewish attitude; only the Jews have to observe the Mosaic Law, while Gentiles are exempt from it. If so, the form that Sunday has finally received is, to my mind, in accordance with this rule. The Sabbath in its content is a Jewish affair; it is a remembrance of the creation of the world, a day which is as a whole dedicated to holiness, a sign of the covenant between God and his people. Resting on the Sabbath has its social aim: it includes not only the children of Israel, but also the foreigner and even the animals. But on the other hand, the Sabbath rest includes also prescriptions which fit the larger aim of the Sabbath, namely, the realiza-

tion of the concept of holiness, both according to its psychological aspect and according to the meaning of holiness as understood by Jewish law. Sunday symbolizes for Christians the resurrection of the Lord and the beginning of the new era. As was probably the case from its very beginnings, it is a day when the community of Christians is assembled for common prayers and service. This is the day of the Christian *Ecclesia*, and as such, Sunday has a special importance for the Church today, in a period of deep religious crisis, when Christian presence must be manifested in the secular world. On the other hand, Sunday is not a Jewish but a Christian feast: according to the original plan of Christianity, Gentiles are not under the yoke of the Law of Moses. Then again, true Christians not only feel that they live in the atmosphere of the joy of salvation, but they also have their own kind of sanctity. According to the faith of the Church, this sanctity became concrete in the sacraments—which all developed from Jewish commandments. At the center of Sunday is the celebration of the sacrament of the Mass, and this is both the element of holiness and a leaven which symbolically unifies the community. And the Sunday rest which is of Jewish origin and was transferred from Sabbath to Sunday, does not have all the character and implications of Jewish law. The yoke of the law is not typical of the Sunday rest; the Sunday rest is the expression of the *social* benefit of the Sabbath, and I see no reason why this achievement should be denied to non-Jews. So today, Sunday and Sabbath can coexist, the one for the Christians and the other for the Jews, and the old tension between the two days can finally be forgotten.

The Sabbath: Call to Justice and Freedom

Bernard Dupuy

Christians tend to look upon the Sabbath as essentially an act of worship, a rite. This point of view is not unfounded since the distinction between the profane and the sacred established by the Sabbath causes it to be regarded as the most fundamental of all rites. However, even from this point of view, there is a difference between Sabbath and Sunday. For the Christian, the heart of Sunday is the celebration of the Eucharist. The day itself is but the necessary *aura*, the obligatory framework of the rite. The Sabbath is just the opposite; it is a fact *in the order of existence*, and only after that, a rite. It is a way of life and not primarily an act of worship; an attitude which in the order of ethics is perhaps the simplest, the most fundamental of all attitudes, that is, the standstill, the interruption of action. For those who observe it, it is the cessation of all activity, even the most legitimate.

In the account of the manna, the Jews were warned that it would not fall on the Sabbath, but they did not immediately understand the significance of this fact and went out to collect as usual. When they found nothing, they understood, and it was from that time that they abstained from all work on the seventh day (Ex. 18:3–17).

Jewish tradition designates the Sabbath as *Shabbat menukhah* or *yom menukhah*, day of rest, of tranquillity, of peace. It is said in the book of Exodus 23:12: "Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your ass may have rest

(*tishbot*), and the son of your bondmaid, and the alien, may be refreshed (*yanuaḥ*)."

Yom menukhah is generally translated by "day of rest". The translation is valid if it is not understood solely as a day of relaxation, ease and recuperation, because the biblical distinction between the six days of the week and the seventh is not between a time of hard toil and one of leisure, but between the time when man does his work (*melakhah*) and that in which he finds peace and rest (*menukhah*). However, the *menukhah,* tranquillity, rest, peace, has its *raison d'être* only in its relationship with the *melakhah,* creative work, task to be accomplished.

The precept of work as "task to be accomplished" (*melakhah*) is found in the Bible within the Sabbath precept itself: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work" (Ex. 20:8–9). It is in the law of the Sabbath that the law of work is given. The finality of real work far outstrips the accomplishment of that work. In the Bible this outstripping has a name: *Shabbat.* The Sabbath reveals the meaning of human work.

The *Mekhilta* on Exodus 20:9 teaches that on the arrival of the Sabbath we should consider our work (*melakhah*) done. Even if our labor (*avodah*) is not ended, our work, our human task (*melakhah*) can be considered finished. A finished task is not, in the biblical sense, an achievement in which nothing is missing, a work without flaw or defect, but a work finished as far as is humanly possible, that is to say, from the material point of view, incomplete. This idea has penetrated Jewish spirituality. The Jew who builds a house must leave it without one or two bricks, with a corner of a wall unfinished. The Jew who assembles a library must always accept to have a few books missing, even books that seem essential. This will remind him that nobody can lay claim to infinite knowledge, above all where the Torah is concerned, and for this reason it is good to be deprived of an important work. This does not hinder the accomplishment of one's task. He who wanted to have all and know all would in reality be a slave and his work but *avodah.*

This danger dogs man at every turn. He can easily leave his preoccupations on Friday evening and yet think of them all the week-end, find no subject of conversation with his family other than

his work, become enslaved to his everyday activities and lose his liberty. The master can end by being more of a slave than his slaves because he uses his freedom to build up a slavery that increases to the detriment of this freedom.

In biblical times the contemporary civilizations based on work were in fact characterized by enslavement to the work. The Jews themselves were bowed under that yoke of hard bondage in which days of rest had been established only with a view to productive activity. The Sabbath was instituted in the context of civilizations that were establishing obligatory work, planned distribution of labor, automatic consumption, so to speak, of goods. The Sabbath was to give life to a society built on principles other than that of imposed work (*avodah*), to foster the evolution of a society that was to transform human effort into creative work (*melakhah*) and working contacts into *just* relationships.

Israel's legislation on justice does indeed stem from the Sabbath law. Its aim is to bring everybody in the world into the divine system of economy of labor. The body of workers could benefit from the divine ordinances and from the human growth that these ordinances make possible.

First there is the foreigner, *nekhar*, who lives in the country. The foreigner in question is one who is still an idolater and who continues to live according to his own customs. There is no question of imposing the Sabbath law on him because he is not bound by it and is not part of the Jewish city, but a relationship with him exists even if only at a business level, and he must be accorded the advantages of the sabbatical year (Deut. 15:3): "Of a foreigner you may exact it; but whatever of yours is with your brother *your hand shall release*." In other words, it is lawful to oblige the foreigner to pay his debts, but during the sabbatical year what has been lent to him must be remitted. The text goes on to say: "But there will be no poor among you." This is a law to assure justice where official organization fails. It is the obligation of sharing and of giving introduced into the economy of free exchange. It is not demanded that the economy of exchange be disturbed but that it should be interrupted. An opportunity for the gesture of giving should be provided. If someone has borrowed and been unable to return the loan, a moment will come when the

lender must agree to transform the loan into a gift. The motive for this legislation is given in Deuteronomy 5:15: "You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt" and "You shall not make of your own country another house of bondage."

There is also the resident visitor, *ger vetoshav.* This means the foreigner who agrees to live in conformity with the law of the land, hence to give up some part of his idolatry by conforming to the laws of Israel. In Deuteronomy 5:14 there is a recommendation to impose no work upon him on the Sabbath day: "You shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your manservant, or your maidservant, or your ox, or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates." Thus other people besides the sons of Israel are affected by the institution of the Sabbath.

There is finally another class of men: the Jewish slaves. What, from the historical point of view, is the *oved ivri?* Is he one of those Jews who were not originally of the children of Jacob and who became assimilated with the people of Israel, or a Jew who was taken as a slave by other Jews? This is not the place to debate such a question, but the fact remains that these workers were circumcised, which means that they had accepted the law of Israel. The *oved ivri* should be able to rest on the seventh day, but he benefits also from another law mentioned in Exodus 21:2: "When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing." His period of service is therefore limited because he is a man called to freedom, but if he says " '. . . I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him . . . to the door or the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through . . ." (Ex. 21:5,6). (This is the origin of the rite of the lintel of doors, of the *mezuzah.*) Why? Because as an *oved ivri* he is a man who has heard the *Shema Yisrael.* He should have understood the call to freedom which has re-echoed since the flight from Egypt, but he has not heard it. Because he prefers to be a slave rather than a free man he must have his ear pierced; he is a weak Jew. However: "Thou shalt not send him away empty-handed. Thou shalt load him with thy gifts." In other words, this slave must receive for his services not only a just recompense but also a share of the surplus of the profit. He has the right to participate in the gains. "You will even give him clothing," says the com-

mentary. That is to say, you will give him everything that can remind him that he *really* is a free man, always for the same reason: "You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt."

Finally, there are laws of justice regulating the relations of free men among themselves. It is said in Leviticus 25:39–43: "If your brother becomes poor beside you, and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave: he shall be with you as a hired servant and as a sojourner." In his own country, then, the Jew should never behave as master, possessor, or conqueror. Even in his own home he should look upon himself as *en route*, in exile. He is a *ger vetoshav* (stranger and sojourner) there. Why? because ultimately *the land belongs to God*, and more than any other land, this land on which—because of the Promise—he has been invited to live.

THE SABBATH AND FREEDOM

To see in the Sabbath an institution that guarantees freedom implies a questioning of the meaning commonly attributed to this word. Current ideas of freedom will certainly not allow of a just evaluation of the Sabbath; on the contrary, the Sabbath lived allows of a just evaluation of current ideas. This approach presupposes a reversal of convictions and habits, a *teshuvah*, and there is no Sabbath without a *teshuvah*.

It is difficult for the modern mind to accept the idea of a Sabbath that frees; it is shocked by the Sabbath laws which it considers restrictive, arbitrary and futile. At the level of the universal history of ideas, modern man is dependent on widely prevalent concepts; he holds to philosophies that proclaim liberation from destiny and the progressive advent of liberty. Religions are understood as agents of liberty in the measure in which, by spiritualizing man, they contribute to this liberation.

In the Bible the discourse on human existence not only plunges into the archeology of destiny from which man is freeing himself; it is also open to the eschatological plan of a Creator. The Bible says less about the advent of freedom than about man's cooperation with his Creator. Man is not so much a reasonable "animal" endowed with liberty as a person in process of being made one who is discovering himself in reference to the Creator. He is a creature in process of

becoming, becoming progressively what he is called to be, and this process of development is evolving within his activity itself, within the human task that he must complete, the *melakhah*. This vision of man in a state of becoming gives a very special significance to human action; this action intervenes in the definition of man's identity and in the way in which he understands himself. He fashions his identity by his work (*melakhah*) when he enters into the project of his Creator, when, in other words, he adopts the way of life proposed to him by the Sabbath.

This is taught by the Midrash on Abraham. Abraham recognized the Savior who had been lost sight of by the civilization of the tower of Babel. Because he ceaselessly referred his conduct to his Creator he was able to preserve the meaning of his own identity. After offering hospitality to three young men, his guests, he invites them to thank him to whom they owe their refreshment, their ability to continue in being. Their true host is not he, Abraham, but the Creator. In these circumstances recognition is not a fortuitous act. Eating, working to feed oneself, recall the precariousness of existence. Man's highest values are always linked to these fundamental acts. There is here a real philosophical commonplace (*pont aux ânes*). Idealistic philosophy has little concern for the body and for food; but the Bible attaches great importance to them. The surest test of faith could perhaps be found in the way in which we take food with others. The meal is the true liturgy, or if you prefer, it is the act by which the creature recognizes his creaturehood. To recognize the Creator is to start behaving as a free person. This is why it is said of Abraham that he was the first to observe the Sabbath. To respect the Sabbath is to witness to the principle of the creation of the world. The Jewish people, by observing the Sabbath, preserve the meaning of creation more surely than the philosophers who demonstrate and affirm it.

Christians are ill-prepared to understand the meaning of the Sabbath. To enter into the spirit of this day is to face up to a certain Christian mentality which rejects the Sabbath precepts in the name of the pauline dialectic of law and grace. For most Christians the Sabbath is the day on which Jews are subjected to legal observances, while Sunday is that on which the children of God recognize that they are called together to freedom. The discussion is not new. For

the Jews and for the Judeo-Christians, faithful to the biblical meaning of law, liberty results from the gift of the law, which is grace. For the pagano-Christians whom St. Paul had in mind and who were forbidden by imperial legislation to follow the Jewish rules, liberty was an effect not of law imposed as an obligation, but of grace, and grace is offered to the pagans by Jesus Christ. St. Paul makes two allusions to the Sabbath which have this meaning (Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:16).

The Sabbath precept seems negative because it consists essentially in the interruption of action. In reality it is positive, founded on the behavior of God himself. Man must *accomplish* the Sabbath (*laasot;* Gen. 2:2).

According to the morning prayer *Veshamru,* the Sabbath is a covenant (*berith*) and a sign (*oth*). It is a precept with a meaning, and *both precept and meaning are given in the Bible.* In general the meaning becomes clear only after the accomplishment of the precept, and the precept is imposed before the finality of its gesture is understood, before its results are experienced. The whole existence of man is constituted thus: man lives without really knowing what his end is, and he must live his life in order to know its meaning. This idea is expressed in the hymn *Lekha dodi: "sof maaseh bamahashaval tehillah"* ("the end of our work was already in the thought of its beginning"). When we act we enter into a thought which is at the origin of our action. The precepts are first put into practice and afterwards their meaning is understood: this is the law of life. As the different moments of existence are authentically lived, the meaning of life is revealed. It is only after certain encounters that its deep signification, perhaps also its finality, is understood. At the time of the event its full significance is not generally apprehended.

What is true at the level of human relations is even more true at the level of relations with God. Man's existence is an existence in process of genesis, lived before it is interpreted. This is why it is said in the Torah: "You shall do and then you shall listen" (in order to understand).

The ways of God are founded upon the precepts, which are norms of conduct aimed at giving man access to his identity, and finally to his freedom. This is the essential structure: *the precept is at the beginning and the identity is at the end,* not the other way round.

Freedom is not given first so that the precept may be fulfilled; the precept, the call, the ethical demand is given at the beginning so that freedom may be attained. This law is exemplified by the Sabbath which begins by the *mitzvah*, austerity, and ends with the *oneg*, joy and freedom.

Israel's religion is a knowledge of means, not an initiation into rites, cults and mysteries. It is before all else an initiation into rules of conduct, precepts. Everything occurs as if man, by applying the precepts, recognized that he was being worked upon by the presentiment of the divine plan which he is called to discover, and by the meaning of his own existence, even if he does not immediately understand its full signification.

It is for this reason that man *merits*. The first man to "merit" in this way was Abraham. Abraham received an order, "*Lekh lekha*", without knowing either its meaning or its consequences. He was to pass through the trial of sacrificing Isaac. His merit (*zekhut*, dignity, grace, rather than "accountancy" merit) lay in his submitting to the precept without knowing where it was going to lead.

As a general rule, the transmitted precept must be obeyed in spite of the fact that it is not possible to discern its full meaning. The Sabbath, however, is a precept whose meaning (*taam*) is unveiled. He who lives the Sabbath imitates the behavior of God. The Bible reveals God, not directly, but by the institution of the Sabbath, and makes known from the beginning the identity of the Creator. The liturgy of Saturday morning is one of *yotser*, the liturgy of the Creator who re-orders the relationship between God and his creature. According to the Bible, the Creator wishes for his creature not so much submission as liberation. The Sabbath was established to initiate liberty.

To understand this interpretation we must turn to the Kabbalah. It says: In the beginning God's world was infinitely higher than that of man. It was a world in which man had as yet no place; to reach it presupposed his death because he could see God only if he died. For man, therefore, there is a starting-point: not the world of the Creator, of him who calls beings into existence, but the world of *bittul hayesh*, the annihilation of being. The thought of a Creator is too strong for man; he cannot bear that thought for long because it is not natural to believe in the Creator.

At the beginning, there was no room for man in God's world. Conversely, there is no place for God in man's world. At the beginning, God was hidden. In the Bible, the gods of natural religion are not *El* (God), they are *elilim*. When God intervened he appeared as *El-Shaddai,* the devastating God. It was only with the cooperation of man that he manifested himself as God the Creator.

If man, continues the Kabbalah, had come into being during the first six days of creation, that is to say, during the period when the Creator intervened every day, he would have been obliged to acknowledge the Creator. But at the moment of man's appearance God had ceased to act. It was as if the world solidified on itself. The world of nature was being established and man, at his birth, was natural man. The world of six days is the world of miracles, of daily interventions by God; the world of the seventh day is the world of nature, the world in which God is no longer faced with plastic, malleable matter but with a new being: man. To say that nature exists is to say that God has in a way set his seal on the world as it had then *become*. Nature, it has been said, is a "habit". In Hebrew *teva* means "nature" but it also means "impression", "seal". Nature is the seal of a genesis, the point of arrival of a preceding history.

Man is born into the world of nature. Nature is that structure of security that allows man to be himself. Thanks to the seventh day, thanks to this halt in the initiatives of God, man can be himself before God in a future perspective. He can also be himself with regard to what he leaves behind him, the world of magic and of the powers of darkness against which he is armed. A return to astrology and to idolatry would be a return of the sixth day into the world of the seventh.

As he emerges from the world of nature biblical man is the first modern man. He is freed from the magic mentality, open to history, becoming aware of himself and acting as a free being in a world that will be his achievement.

That God has willed the Sabbath means, then, according to the Kabbalah, that God has set man free to accomplish his work in nature. Ever since that time God's work has been finished. A new stage is beginning, that of relationship between God and man, and that of God in history. The advent of man inaugurates history, and man introduces the dimension of God into the world. If there is a

place for God there, it is that prepared for him and consecrated to him by man, who brings about this preparation and this consecration essentially by observing the Sabbath.

God's interventions in history are ruptures of the Sabbath, not abandonment or rejection but momentary provisional ruptures, because he has been obliged to intervene in order to save man when man has failed in the plan of becoming what he ought to be: just and conformed to the moral design of the Creator. There was then *pikuah nefesh:* man was in mortal danger and God saved him. God intervened among men after Adam's sin, at the time of Noe, and at the time of Abraham.

The Sabbath will not be entirely fulfilled until Israel is able to give to the world the meaning of that day, the freedom that is at the heart of this celebration. Then the covenant with creation will be sealed. The Sabbath still remains to be done (*laasot*). It is not concerned with prohibitions alone, because there is a task to be accomplished, a meaning to be made comprehensible.

To attain this, nothing less than the entire history of humanity is necessary. This task is confided to Israel. Israel's identity bears within itself the secret of man's identity. As long as the unity of man has not been achieved, as long as man has no access to the values of the Sabbath, to the *menukhah* as well as to the *melakhah,* we cannot speak of his identity. The forging of the identity of the whole human race starts with the identity of Israel. As long as Israel has not built the *mishkan* (tabernacle), that is, the "Sabbath space" for the Lord, the unity of the human race is not yet in view.

If Israel observes the Sabbath so faithfully it is not only for herself; it is because she believes that Sabbath observance keeps the world alive. "If there were one man who observed the Sabbath perfectly," says Jewish tradition, "the next world could begin." Abraham engendered the people of the Sabbath; he is the just man who made it possible for the Sabbath to be observed; but "the just man is the foundation of the world". Thus the world subsists through the Sabbath, and the Sabbath guarantees freedom to man.

PART IV

Liturgical Tensions and Liturgical Renewal

Anti-Jewish Elements in Christian Liturgy

Piet van Boxel and Margaret McGrath

On April 17, 1976 a news item appeared in the *New York Times* under the heading "A Good Friday Hymn Being Questioned". Several Jews and Christians were quoted as expressing concern about the continued use, in the Roman Catholic liturgy, of the ancient hymn called the *Improperia* or "Reproaches". A few months later, an Anti-Defamation League publication on the theme "Liturgy and Better Understanding"[1] dealt not only with the "Reproaches" but the wider problem of the anti-Jewish tenor of Christian liturgical texts. Meanwhile, a group of Christian scholars in the United States, called the Israel Study Group, was discussing a liturgical interpretation of the Passion account prepared by Rev. John Townsend.[2] In time for Lent of that year, a British publication directed to Catholic clergy included the article "Reading the Passion in Holy Week".[3] And in various Catholic dioceses, commissions for ecumenical and interreligious affairs followed up previous efforts by offering their clergy material on the Jewish elements and background of the Lenten readings.[4] These examples indicate a deepening realization among Christians of the far-reaching influence of liturgical formulas on religious attitudes.[5] What are some of the issues involved?

The need for revision of liturgical texts and customs has been recognized for some time: the restoration (in 1955) of the genuflection at the *Oremus* preceding the prayer for the Jews in the Roman Catholic Good Friday liturgy (a gesture for which Jules Isaac had pleaded in 1949), and Pope John XXIII's suppression of the phrase

perfidis Judaeis in 1958, are well known. Growing sensitivity to possible seeds of anti-Semitism in Christian writings has led to examination of such traditional texts as the Good Friday hymn mentioned above. This ancient hymn places in the mouth of Christ a litany of reproaches against the ingratitude of "his people", using the biblical images of such blessings as the exodus from Egypt and the manna in the desert. On the one hand, the use of the "Reproaches" has been defended on the grounds that, properly understood, the Christian participant in the liturgy identifies *himself* as the ungrateful recipient of God's blessings. On the other hand, as John Townsend remarks, "it is doubtful whether many worshipers in the church on Good Friday would have the theological sophistication to understand that The Reproaches are actually a self-accusation".[6] In any case, the hymn is an optional element in the liturgy, not universally used, and its total suppression might not be too difficult to obtain.[7]

A more problematic area which can be a source of anti-Jewish attitudes is that of the Scripture readings to which church goers are regularly exposed. The Passion accounts read during the Holy Week liturgy give real cause for concern since they are an important part of the services and their frequent anti-Jewish references occur in the context of what is most sacred in Christian tradition. (In addition, due to the length of the Palm Sunday gospel reading in the Roman Catholic liturgy, there is frequently no homily accompanying the reading. The cumulative effect of years of uncommented use of Scripture have been graphically underlined by James Parkes.[8]) In this connection the instructions in the 1975 *Guidelines* sent out from Rome are very pertinent:

> With respect to liturgical readings, care will be taken to see that homilies based on them will not distort their meaning, especially when it is a question of passages which seem to show the Jewish people as such in an unfavourable light. Efforts will be made so to instruct the Christian people that they will understand the true interpretation of all the texts and their meaning for the contemporary believer.[9]

This exhortation from the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews contains no small challenge. To be aware of

the "true interpretation of all the texts" demands a knowledge of the background of the gospels. In connection with the Passion accounts, the reader, listener and preacher should at least be aware that the many passages laying blame for the death of Jesus on "the Jews" (while absolving the Romans) spring from the complex situation of the early Christian community. By the time the gospel of John was written, the schism between Synagogue and infant Church had been deepened by the introduction into the *Shemoneh Esreh* (Eighteen Blessings) of a prayer which Christians could not in conscience recite (we will not go into the much-discussed term "*minim*"). At the same time, in order not to antagonize their political rulers, Christians were anxious to minimize the part played by Roman authorities in the death of Jesus. A third element which contributed to anti-Jewish bias in New Testament writings was the frustration of the early followers of Jesus at the refusal of most of their fellow countrymen to accept him as Messiah.

To return to the specific problem of how to handle the Holy Week Scripture readings: Aware that an attempt simply to excise the anti-Jewish elements in the Passion readings would result in cutting away the very story the texts were meant to convey, some Christians have become convinced that the solution lies in re-writing the Passion accounts. For such an approach there is a certain amount of precedent in the oldest rites of the Christian Church. Biblical material has been adapted for liturgical use in order to heighten the drama, to provide commentary on the principal readings from Scripture, and to involve the worshipper (e.g. the *Exultet* of the Easter Vigil service).[10] It was with this in mind that John Townsend prepared *A Liturgical Interpretation of Our Lord's Passion in Narrative Form*.[11] It draws from the various gospel accounts and pays special attention to those passages touching Jewish participation in the Passion. How well does it answer the need which inspired it?

First of all, it combats anti-Semitism by removing the possibility of anti-Jewish interpretation. Statements are qualified and the narrative is phrased so that the reader "will understand the events as a knowledgeable first-century Palestinian follower of Jesus might have understood them" (page 3). For example, the first paragraph includes the line: "The religious leaders who collaborated with the Roman occupation were conspiring against Jesus" (page 4), and the

section on the trial of Jesus is introduced by: "Those who had seized Jesus brought him to Caiaphas, whom the Romans had made High Priest" (page 6). The text (itself very brief) is accompanied by twenty-four pages of notes on the historical background and the differing views of scholars in regard to these and other lines in the narrative.

The author writes: "Such a liturgical reading should in no way be construed as a factual, historical reconstruction" (page 2). However, the choice of material does often seem to be based on whether or not a particular event is considered historical. More to the point, such a conflation of material from the various sources leaves nothing of the particular literary structure of the different gospel accounts. The distinctive theology and christology of the individual evangelist is lost.

A further question arises in assessing such a re-writing of the gospels: is there no hope, through education, of forming a discerning Christian reader? If the only alternative is a re-writing of the Passion accounts, does this not imply—since the whole Bible is open to Christian misinterpretation[12]—that Sacred Scripture is unusable as it stands? In fact, Townsend recognizes this at least with regard to the New Testament: "The anti-Jewish passages within the New Testament are extensive enough [that] to 'translate' them out would involve the complete re-writing of much that we hold sacred."[13]

Perhaps other alternatives could be pursued a little further. Although new translations will not *in themselves* remedy the problem, translation in the style of a Christian "Targum" might bring more clarity to ambiguous texts, with clarifications added to meet the pastoral needs of particular audiences. A safeguarding of the literary style of the evangelist—a presentation of John's Passion "drama", for example—might help the Christian to appreciate that the author's purpose was theological more than historical.

Furthermore, the *Guidelines* stress the necessity of seeing in the New Testament texts "their meaning for the contemporary believer". The Christian faithful need more help to become aware, not only of the historical background of the Passion accounts, but the underlying aim of the gospel writers. "The evangelists had a theological purpose which they tried to fulfill through dramatic narrative. Because their narratives sound to the modern ear like history, the theo-

logical intent of the evangelists is largely thwarted."[14] The "good news" that is being proclaimed is *not* that some Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus "out of sheer malice, worldly ambition, jealousy and mob hysteria",[15] but rather, as one of the earliest Christian texts expresses it, ". . . that Christ died for our sins . . . that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (I Cor 15:3–4). And the New Testament call to repentance and faith leaves the Christian conscious that *he* is the crucifier, not "the others".[16]

From what has been said above about the implications of seeing much of the New Testament as "unusable" in its original form because of its anti-Jewish tenor, it is obvious we here touch on a wider question than simply the liturgical readings in Holy Week. The whole problem of the Christian approach to the sacred writings of the New Testament—and indeed of the whole Bible—needs to be faced. (For a thought-provoking presentation of some controversial views in this area, see Rosemary Ruether's *Faith and Fratricide*[17] with the introduction by Gregory Baum.)

What do we think the Bible is? Have we not sometimes seen it as a book of history (in the modern sense), or a handbook of dogma, or even as an enlarged catechism containing all the answers? Has not its designation as a "book of revealed truth" often been too narrowly interpreted? Surely what we must strive to do is to *retain* the Scriptures that have been handed down through the centuries and let them speak to us, but with the realization that their accounts are colored by the pastoral and catechetical needs of the situation in which the authors were writing, as well as the bitter struggles and political milieu in first century Palestine. Sacred Scripture reflects *life*, life as it is. The Bible is the expression of a people's experience with God, of life lived and experienced *before God*. When faced with the influences which "Christians find . . . very hard to admit . . . can be present in the Gospel of love", it might be fruitful to reflect that

> the followers of Jesus were subject to the ordinary human reactions when faced with opposition. The Gospel did not automatically convert them once and for all to the ideal proposed in the Sermon on the Mount. . . . Like the early

> disciples, we too are not lifted out of our own time nor preserved from ordinary human passions and emotional reactions which limit our response to the Gospel demand. The Gospel in fact reveals our own need to repent and be pardoned.[18]

Rather than cut out the passages which embarrass them,

> Christian believers must wrestle with the limitations imposed on the Scriptures by the circumstances in which they were written. . . . They must reckon with the implications inherent in the fact that the word of God has come to us in the words of men. To excise dubious attitudes from the readings of Scripture is to perpetuate the fallacy that what one hears in the Bible is always to be imitated because it is "revealed" by God, the fallacy that every position taken by an author of Scripture is inerrant.[19]

Notes

1. *Face to Face: An Interreligious Bulletin,* Vol. II Summer/Fall, 1976.
2. *A Liturgical Interpretation of Our Lord's Passion in Narrative Form,* New York: National Conference of Christians and Jews, 1977.
3. Mary Kelly, O.L.S., *The Clergy Review,* Vol. LXII No. 3 (1977), pp. 110–112.
4. E.g. Los Angeles Archdiocesan Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (Los Angeles Priest-Rabbi Committee), *Lenten Pastoral Reflection,* and John M. Oesterreicher, *Comments on the Major Readings for the Sundays in Lent, 1977,* distributed by the Archdiocese of Newark, Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (Subcommittee for Catholic-Jewish Concerns).
5. See relevant chapters in *Faith without Prejudice* by Eugene Fisher (Paulist Press, 1977).
6. " 'The Reproaches' in Christian Liturgies", *Face to Face,* Vol. II Summer/Fall, 1976, p. 9.

7. *New York Times*, April 17, 1976, p. 36, col. 2. [In 1981 the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy recommended alternative "Reproaches" for Good Friday based on Psalm 22—ed.]
8. "The Bible in Public Worship: A Source of Antisemitism", *Face to Face*, p. 4.
9. Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration "Nostra Aetate" No. 4*, Dec. 1, 1974 (issued in January 1975).
10. Gerald S. Sloyan, "The Jews and the New Roman Lectionary", *Face to Face*, p. 6.
11. See note 2.
12. James W. Parkes, "The Bible in Public Worship: A Source of Antisemitism", *Face to Face*, p. 4.
13. *A Liturgical Interpretation of Our Lord's Passion*, p. 1.
14. Sloyan, "The Jews and the New Roman Lectionary", p. 8.
15. Kelly, "Reading the Passion in Holy Week", p. 111.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, New York: Seabury Press, 1974. For responses to Ruether, see A.T. Davies, ed., *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity*, New York. Paulist Press, 1979.
18. Kelly, op. cit., p. 111f.
19. Raymond E. Brown, "The Passion According to John: Chapters 18 and 19", *Worship*, Vol. 49, No. 3, p. 131.

Catholic Liturgy: From Theory to Praxis

Eugene J. Fisher

INTRODUCTION

Without going into the details of the unhappy history of the past two thousand years, our authors nevertheless referred to it in order to explain how it has come about that neither the Jewish nor the Christian tradition has held, until now, a commonly understood theory of the other, even though the basis for such affirmations is certainly present in both religions. Our days have witnessed wonderful advances in the *practice* of dialogue side by side with the emergence of a *theory* of Jewish-Christian relations.

THEORY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH DOCTRINE

As the "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration, *Nostra Aetate,* No. 4" (December 1974) express it:

> "The question of Jewish-Christian relations concerns the Church as such, since it is when 'pondering her own mystery' that she comes up against the mystery of Israel. Therefore, even in areas where no Jewish communities exist, this remains an important problem. There is also an ecumenical aspect: the very return of Christians to the sources and origins of their faith, grafted onto the earlier covenant, helps the search for unity in Christ, the cornerstone."

The ecumenical aspect of our relations with Judaism is the reason why the Church's Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism is attached to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity rather than to the Secretariat for Non-Christians.

Since Christianity, like Judaism, is a historical religion based on revelation, it must come to grips, both in its theological reflection and in the action which must proceed from it, with the two historical events of the holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel. These two facts of history have shattered so many of the false assumptions on which an earlier attitude was based.

In the last thirty years Christians have been trying to articulate their new understanding of Judaism. The Catholic Church, for example, issued its Declaration, *Nostra Aetate,* during the Second Vatican Council. Although this text is most well known for its negative statements, that is to say, its denouncing of antisemitism and denial of collective responsibility for the death of Jesus, it is even more important that we appreciate its positive elements, such as the manner in which it stresses the continuing validity of the Jewish covenant with God. This same *present* reality of God's eternal covenant with the Jewish people was stressed by Pope John Paul II during his recent visit to Germany.

PRAXIS: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEORY

Catechesis

A great amount of work has been done to date on the revision of text books in the United States in order to eliminate offensive references to Jews and Judaism. While results have been good on the whole, one notes that the question of how to present the Pharisees in their correct historical and religious context is still a problematic one with dangerous overtones.

Then too, further work is needed in the presentation of the responsibility for the death of Christ. Because old catechetical misconceptions have been taught for so long, a conscious strategy is needed in order to replace them. The key to this new approach is a proper understanding of the covenant relationship between the two peoples.

(*With regard to catechesis, see Eugene J. Fisher,* "Christian Teaching and Judaism Today: A Study of Religion Texts," *in SIDIC Vol. XI, No. 1, 1978, pp. 12–20.*)

Education Through Liturgy

The liturgy is a medium of education at least as important as, if not more so than the classroom. In the selection of readings in the lectionary, their translation, introduction and interpretation, a theological statement is made not only concerning the nature of the *community* assembled for worship (the Church) but about its relationship to and with that "other" community whom we know to be in covenant with God, and to whose covenant our Christian covenant inheres even as it extends it.

On one level, this problem is vividly seen in the selection of texts, in the very juxtaposition of readings from the Hebrew Scriptures with readings from the New Testament. The basis for that selection is as much a statement about that relationship as it is about the "content" of the message consciously proclaimed. Here are raised, in the most dramatic fashion, all of the ancient questions surrounding the relationship between the testaments. Pope John Paul II in his address in Germany pointed to the mutual interdependence between this classic biblical question and the question of Jewish-Christian relations:

> "The first dimension of this dialogue, that is the meeting between the people of God of the old covenant never revoked by God (Rm 11:29), on the one hand, and the people of the new covenant on the other, is at the same time a dialogue within our own Church, so to speak, a dialogue between the first and second part of its Bible."

Problems Posed by the Lectionary

In the liturgy, this internal/external dialogue comes to a head. Unfortunately, the present lectionary, I believe it can be safely said, has been developed almost entirely without conscious reference to either of these issues. Equally unfortunately, little work has been done by our scholars to analyze the impact which the present selec-

tions have on Christian attitudes toward the Hebrew Scriptures and the Jews. My own work in the field has barely scratched the surface, doing little more than attempting to raise the issues for serious study.[2]

To what extent, I have asked, do the selections embody a sense of continuity between the Testaments, and to what extent a discontinuity? That is, do the selections juxtapose the one *over against* the other, to the detriment of the "old"? Or do the selections mutually reinforce and illumine each other as do the revelations which they represent?[3]

Are "old" and "new" categories of equal esteem, as they function to guide the selection process, or do they tend, in practice in the liturgy, to take on a "Marcionite" tinge in which the "old" is at best preparatory to and exhausted in the new?

A Catholic biblical scholar, Joseph Blenkinsopp, has raised the issue in a different context in a remarkable essay for the recent collection, *Biblical Studies: Meeting Ground Between Jews and Christians* (Paulist, Stimulus, 1980), edited by L. Boadt, H. Croner and L. Klenicki. In it, he notes that the question of the relationship between the testaments remains a major stumbling block in most Christian attempts to formulate an adequate "theology of the Old Testament". The Hebrew Scriptures, viewed entirely through the prism of the New Testament (or, rather, what we discern of the New Testament message when viewing it in its turn through the prism of later, often anti-Judaic Christian thought), are not allowed to speak for themselves. Christian categories and interests are used to organize its contents and message in a way its authors might well never have expected. One of the few attempts, Blenkinsopp concludes, to allow the Hebrew text to speak directly to us without undue filtering, is that done be the Catholic scholar, Fr. John L. McKenzie in *A Theology of the Old Testament* (Doubleday, Image, 1976).

Praxis can force re-evaluation of theory, and vice-versa. Is typology, which is so important an aspect of the liturgical approach to scripture, truly adequate as a criterion for choosing one text from the Hebrew Scripture over another? Will the spiritual riches of the Hebrew text in the long run be impoverished by over-reliance on typology in establishing the liturgy of the Word? Again, I do not claim to have all the answers here, but the question remains a nag-

ging one which I believe those competent in liturgical studies within the Church need very much to address from the point of view of the dialogue.

The Already versus the Not-Yet

An even more nagging question in my mind is that of the promise/fulfillment theme, which is so predominant in the choices made from the prophetic writings, especially during Advent and Lent. Do these selections, as included in the present lectionary, focus the congregation's hopes on the Kingdom which Jesus preached, which Jesus called us to prepare for and which is the primary underlying vision of the prophets themselves? Or do they exhaust the prophetic vision entirely in a set of "proof-texts" which would imply that the Kingdom is wholly "fulfilled" already here and now in Jesus? Here, of course, is a tension basic to the structure of the New Testament itself: the tension between the "already here" of the eschatological hope, and the "not yet" of the realization that we still must pray, as Jesus taught us, "Thy Kingdom Come".

The Kingdom, God's Will being done "on earth as it is in heaven", has certainly not yet "come" in any normal sense of the term. Liturgy as educational praxis should reflect this tension that lies at the heart of Christianity. Both poles, the fulfillment-in-one-sense-in-Jesus and the Jesus-calls-us-to-be-part-of-the-fulfillment, I believe, need to be evoked in our congregation if liturgy is to do its proper task.

At this point it becomes clear that our theological terminology needs to be renewed to be adequate to the tasks before us. That is, the theory of Jewish-Christian relations is lagging somewhat behind the praxis of Jewish-Christian dialogue, with the result that the praxis of liturgy, which should embody the insights of the dialogue, has difficulty formulating adequate criteria. The 1974 Vatican Guidelines raise this point quite carefully in their section on the liturgy, and in doing so illustrate, I believe, the need for fuller theological clarification:

> "When commenting on Biblical texts, emphasis will be laid on the continuity of our faith with that of the earlier cove-

> nant, in the perspective of the promises, without minimizing those elements of Christianity which are original. We believe that those promises were fulfilled with the first coming of Christ. But it is nonetheless true that we still await their perfect fulfillment in His glorious return at the end of time."

"Fulfillment vs. perfect fulfillment", I would with all due deference submit, is a distinction that will need to be made more clearly if it is to be communicated to our people whether in our catechetical texts or from the pulpit. Yet it is one of the most significant advances of the dialogue to have taken us to the point where such a distinction can for the first time be discerned. Failure to make it turned many of the medieval "disputations" into classic examples of non-communication, leading to entirely unnecessary bitterness and even violence between our two religious communities.

In 1263, for example, the great Spanish thinker, Rabbi Nahmanides, was called by the King of Aragon to respond to a series of proof texts offered by Christian scholars. How could the Jews not see that all of these biblical prophecies were fulfilled in the person of Jesus?

Nahmanides responded on an entirely different level than his questioners anticipated. Referring to the biblical prophecies that the coming of the messianic age would be marked by universal peace and justice in the world (e.g. Is. 2:4; Micah 4:3, etc.), Nahmanides pointed out the wars, plagues, oppressions and other evils rampant in the world he knew. The Christians, in short were focussing on the *person* of the Messiah; the Jews on the messianic age that the Messiah would inaugurate. Each was a *non sequitur* so far as the other was concerned.

Yet to focus on the Kingdom (the Messianic Age) not only allows theological space for the acknowledgment of the validity of the Jewish response, it can also add a sense of realism, and deeper spiritual hope and longing to the Christian liturgy that is quite authentic on Christian terms. Indeed, it can help to restore the sense of eschatological tension spoken of earlier that is all too easily lost when focussing solely on the Jesus we "have" and failing to respond to the Jesus who calls us to surpass our best efforts in building up God's

Kingdom. True dialogue thus enables us not only to know the "other" better, but also to know ourselves better, to see in our tradition spiritual depths we might otherwise have missed.

Two other issues, which are perhaps already better known, need also to be briefly mentioned to conclude this section on education through liturgy. The first is a negative, a sign of the distance we have to travel, to work our way out of the tragedies of the past. The second is essentially positive, a movement now going on which, if carefully nurtured, will enable us to learn much about each other.

The Place of Passion Narratives in the Liturgy

The first issue is of course the dynamic of the reading of the passion narratives during Holy week. This, it can be said, is an old problem seeking a new solution. Overwhelming historical evidence has taught us beyond a shadow of doubt that these readings, coming as they do at the high point of the annual liturgical cycle and proclaimed in the most intense emotional setting of which the liturgy is capable, instill not only reverence for Jesus' sacrifice in the hearts of Christians, but various measure of negative attitudes towards Jews and Judaism as well. John's Gospel, for example, consistently uses the phrase *hoi 'Ioudaioi,* normally (but not necessarily validly) translated as "the Jews", to describe the small number of Jewish individuals historically involved. A sense, even if only an unconscious one, of collective guilt will thus almost inevitably be inculcated in our faithful by the recitation of this gospel.

Matthew's gospel, like John's written late in the first century, inserts phrases in the earlier narratives with which it works, which intensify a Jewish role and diminish the obvious Roman involvement as both judge and executioner. "His blood be upon us and on our children", for example, is attested to only in Matthew.

The problem here is two-fold. Not only are negative (in the past often violent) sentiments instilled through a liturgy that aims to elevate heart and soul to respond to God's ultimate gift of love, but the lesson of the Catechism of Trent, the lesson of the guilt we as Christians must assume by reason of our sins, is misplaced. Our guilt as sinners is projected onto the Jews, diffusing and scattering the

purity of contrition to which the liturgy at this point calls us. Yet we cannot *not* read these passages, for they are central to the faith.

Suggestions for resolving the dilemma have been varied and diverse. Perhaps only a combination of all of them will suffice. Better translations, based on the latest biblical scholarship, will help here as in other problematic lectionary passages, as has been urged in the 1974 Vatican Guidelines. Another option, which also has merit, lies in a more careful selection of passages. Catholic tradition frequently selects some verses and omits others from a given Scriptural passage, "editing" the pericope to fit best the mood and intent of the liturgy of the day. Religious education programming during Lent, for both the young and in adult education programs,[4] should be designed more carefully to give the necessary historical and theological background for the texts so that the faithful, when hearing them proclaimed, will be adequately prepared to receive the proclamation without harboring ill will, or even hatred of Jews.

Perhaps most significantly, preachers of the gospel must be better trained.[5] They must understand such passages and learn to gear their homilies toward bringing out the central message of the text, the message of the Christ-event, and thus guide their people away from the misunderstandings of Jews and Judaism that will occur without such conscious effort. It must be remembered again, that we deal not with a "neutral" tradition but one which for two millennia has been sadly skewed toward the negative in its approach to all such questions involving Jews. Truth, and the integrity of the liturgy itself, demand no less than what the 1974 Vatican Guidelines called an "overriding preoccupation" to ensure that negative attitudes are not fostered in this holiest time of the year.

Jewish Feasts: Their Celebration by Christians

Finally, a brief mention should be made of the phenomenon of Christian celebration of Jewish feasts. The practice is growing, and should be encouraged for its educational value, particularly regarding the two feasts of Pesach (Passover) and Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Memorial Day). In both instances, Christian spiritual life can be enriched by exposure to these moving religious events.

But a note of caution is also in order. With reference to the Passover Seder, it needs to be noted that syncretism is to be avoided. Some Christians tend to use the Seder as a starting point for the liturgy of the Eucharist, eliding our two traditions into one in a way that does justice to the uniqueness of neither. While spiritually and historically linked, the Seder and the Mass celebrate two separate events and embody the collective faith of two unique peoples. The rites of the Triduum are the Church's annual memorial of the events of Jesus passion, dying and rising. The Seder should be celebrated for what it is: a Jewish feast, with sensitivity to those to whom it truly belongs. Indeed, it is preferable to go to Jewish homes, or at least to invite Jewish neighbors to conduct the ritual so that the point is clearly understood by all.[6]

Yom HaShoah memorial services for the victims of the Holocaust are also increasingly taking place in Catholic and Protestant parishes in the U.S. Again, these are most effectively done on an interreligious basis. The reasons Christians join with the Jewish community in remembering the victims of Hitler's genocidal mania include a sense of solidarity with all the victims of the death camps, and as a means of stating publically that we still stand with all those forces today which work toward the elimination of the causes of such monstrous events. "Never again!" should be a Christian as well as a Jewish cry—for Christians were involved, both as vicitms and as persecutors in the massacres which made it up.

FUTURE TASKS

I believe I have indicated in the body of this paper more than enough to keep us all quite busy in the dialogue for some time to come. Let me just make three short observations for future action by way of conclusion:

1. Theory

Desperately needed for the progress made thus far to be consolidated and proved a basis for further renewal will be the involvement of our major Christian thinkers in all the traditional fields of theological pursuit. We have seen how the issues reach to the core of scriptural

studies as well as systematics, liturgy as well as catechesis. Implicit also are major renewals of thought in ecclesiology (how can *we* be the "people of God" if *they* are?), eschatology (the tension between fulfillment and not-yet fulfilled), Church history (both the story of antisemitism in the Church—largely untold even at the highest levels of our studies—and the story of the development of Judaism alongside of Christianity through the centuries—largely unstudied by either side), and even missiology (does the universal proclamation of the Church's message of salvation necessarily include a people *already* in covenant with God?)

These are questions in the main unraised in most of our theological treatises. Yet those will continue to be inadequate to the Church's central questions today until the dialogue is taken seriously into account and integrated into the basic structure of our doctrinal renewal.

2. Praxis

Urgent is the task of bringing the question of the dialogue to bear throughout the seminary curriculum. This is not only by way of preparing candidates for the priesthood in a way that will enable them to overcome the misunderstandings of the past for themselves and their congregations but also because exposure to Jewish thought and tradition will greatly enrich their spiritual lives in a way quite appropriate and, indeed, necessary today.

3. The Dialogue

A major lesson to be learned both by Christians and by Jews dealing with Christians is the lesson of patience. The Church has moved with seemingly miraculous speed and efficiency in rooting out the sources of antisemitism from our teaching and replacing them with positive understandings and true religious respect. Yet it took us, as I have said before, two millennia to work our way into the mess we Christians were in, both in theory and praxis, by the middle of this century. Even with the Spirit aiding our efforts in this direction, as I deeply believe to be the case, it may take some time to work our way out of it. The only way to do that will be by the way of dialogue, of sensitive caring, always keeping our vision high on the

ultimate reality of the One who calls to us across the ages to proclaim His Name, and His alone.

Notes

1. The full text of *From Theory to Praxis* was published in *Origins*, Documentary Service of NC News in the U.S.A., August 27, 1981, Vol. 11, no. 11, pp. 167–176.
2. See Eugene J. Fisher, "Continuity and Discontinuity in the Scriptural Readings", *Liturgy* (May, 1978) 30–37.
3. Cf. *Dei Verbum* 14–16, and the 1974 Vatican Guidelines, Section II, "Liturgy".
4. The Diocese of Memphis, for example, initiated in 1978 an adult education program implemented in nearly every parish of the diocese. The "Commentary on Matthew"' used in the program has since been published by Paulist Press. The Diocese of Los Angeles has developed booklets for Cycles A, B and C of all the lenten Sunday readings, designed for use by homilists or as inserts in the Sunday bulletin to give a proper understanding of the readings. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati sent out to all priests and deacons a succinct but powerful background piece for all homilies dealing with the Passion. Copies are available from the U.S. Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations.
5. My own "Suggested Guidelines for Homilists" have been published in *Liturgy* (May, 1978) and reprinted subsequently in English and French in *SIDIC,* Vol. XI, No. 1, 1978, pp. 23 f. *Sens,* and *Encounter Today.*
6. Rabbi Leon Klenicki of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and Gabe Huck of the Liturgy Training Program of the archdiocese of Chicago have recently published a joint Seder for use in the Jewish-Christian, dialogical context, which is the proper context for such a celebration.

Appendix: Introductory Note

Eugene J. Fisher

In the Fall of 1988, the Administrative Committee approved the document, *God's Mercy Endures Forever* as a statement of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. It is the first such official document devoted entirely to the liturgical implications of the reconciliation between the church and the Jewish people begun by the Second Vatican Council. It is reprinted here with permission of the USCC Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, and is available directly from them in individual orders or in bulk (Publication No. 247-0; Phone: 800-235-USCC). We include here also the bibliography of "Suggested Readings" recommended by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy.

God's Mercy Endures Forever draws in a remarkable way upon the scholarly sources represented in this volume, as well as upon the numerous official statements of the church mentioned in its "Documentation" section. It both reflects and refracts these rich materials, providing a focus for all that has been said above and, in the process, a vision for the future.

As such, it provides a fitting conclusion for this volume, as well as a trenchant summary of the challenges raised for us by our contributors.

Appendix: God's Mercy Endures Forever: Guidelines on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching

Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy
National Conference of Catholic Bishops

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his mercy endures forever;
Give thanks to the God of gods,
for his mercy endures forever;
Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his mercy endures forever;

. . . . .

Who remembered us in our abjection,
for his mercy endures forever;
And freed us from our foes,
for his mercy endures forever;
Who gives food to all flesh,
for his mercy endures forever.
Give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his mercy endures forever. *Psalm 136:1–3, 23–26*

PREFACE

Even in the twentieth century, the age of the Holocaust, the Shoah, the "Scouring Wind," God's mercy endures forever.

The Holocaust drew its fiery breath from the ancient, sometimes latent, but always persistent anti-Semitism which, over the centuries, found too large a place within the hearts of too many Christian men and women. Yet, since the Holocaust and since the Second Vatican Council, Christians have struggled to learn the reasons for such irrational and anti-Christian feelings against the special people for whom "God's mercy endures forever," to deal with those feelings, and to overcome them through knowledge, understanding, dialogue, and love.

For the past fifteen years, the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy and its Secretariat have attempted to respond to the decree of Nostra Aetate *and to the various documents issued by the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, to see to it that our liturgical celebrations never again become occasions for that anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish sentiment that sometimes marred the liturgy in the past. Working with the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the Committee on the Liturgy and its Secretariat have suggested pastoral ways to deal with such matters as Christians gathering for a seder in Holy Week, the proper understanding of the* Improperia *on Good Friday, and the proclamation of the passion narratives in Holy Week, particularly on Good Friday.*

The present statement and guidelines are also offered in response to Nostra Aetate *and especially to the latest guidelines issued in 1985 by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. These guidelines are intended to offer assistance to Catholic preachers so that Jews and Judaism are correctly and rightly presented in homilies and other forms of preaching. For preaching to be of the Spirit, the heart of the preacher must be converted. These guidelines are also meant to offer preachers assistance in their own understanding of Jews and Judaism and, if necessary, to be a help in their own conversion.*

The preparation and publication of God's Mercy Endures Forever *was made possible only because of the participation and insight of*

a number of men and women who are scholars of the Bible, of Christian and Jewish liturgy, or of Judaism. The Liturgy Committee and Secretariat owe a special debt of gratitude to the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and to the NCCB Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations for their support and assistance at every turn in the preparation of this document, which takes its title from that hesed, *that enduring merciful love of God for all who are faithful to the Law.*

Most Rev. Joseph P. Delaney
Bishop of Fort Worth
Chairman
Bishops' Committee on Liturgy

INTRODUCTION

On June 24, 1985, the solemnity of the Birth of John the Baptist, the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews issued its *Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis of the Roman Catholic Church* (hereafter, 1985 *Notes;* USCC Publication No. 970). The 1985 *Notes* rested on a foundation of previous church statements, addressing the tasks given Catholic homilists by the Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions* (*Nostra Aetate*), no. 4.

On December 1, 1974, for example, the Holy See had issued *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration "Nostra Aetate," no. 4* (hereafter, 1974 *Guidelines*). The second and third sections of this document placed central emphasis upon the important and indispensable role of the homilist in ensuring that God's Word be received without prejudice toward the Jewish people or their religious traditions, asking "with respect to liturgical readings," that "care be taken to see that homilies based on them will not distort their meaning, especially when it is a question of passages which seem to show the Jewish people as such in unfavorable light" (1974 *Guidelines,* no. 2).

In this country, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in 1975, similarly urged catechists and homilists to work together to develop among Catholics increasing "appreciation of the Jewishness

of that heritage and rich spirituality which we derive from Abraham, Moses, the prophets, the psalmists, and other spiritual giants of the Hebrew Scriptures" (*Statement on Catholic-Jewish Relations,* November 20, 1975, no. 12).

Much progress has been made since then. As it continues, sensitivities will need even further sharpening, founded on the Church's growing understanding of biblical and rabbinic Judaism.

It is the purpose of these present *Guidelines* to assist the homilist in these continuing efforts by indicating some of the major areas where challenges and opportunities occur and by offering perspectives and suggestions for dealing with them.

JEWISH ROOTS OF THE LITURGY

1. "Our common spiritual heritage [with Judaism] is considerable. To assess it carefully in itself and with due awareness of the faith and religious life of the Jewish people as they are professed and practiced still today, can greatly help us to understand better certain aspects of the life of the Church. Such is the case with the liturgy, whose Jewish roots remain still to be examined more deeply, and in any case should be better known and appreciated by the faithful" (Pope John Paul II, March 6, 1982).

2. Nowhere is the deep spiritual bond between Judaism and Christianity more apparent than in the liturgy. The very concepts of a liturgical cycle of feasts and the *lectio continua* principle of the lectionary that so mark Catholic tradition are adopted from Jewish liturgical practice. Easter and Pentecost have historical roots in the Jewish feasts of Passover and Shavuot. Though their Christian meaning is quite distinct, an awareness of their original context in the story of Israel is vital to their understanding, as the lectionary readings themselves suggest. Where appropriate, such relationships should be pointed out. The homilist, as a "mediator of meaning" (NCCB Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*, 1982) interprets for the liturgical assembly not only the Scriptures but their liturgical context as well.

3. The central action of Christian worship, the eucharistic celebration, is likewise linked historically with Jewish ritual. The term for Church, *ecclesia,* like the original sense of the word *synagogue*, is

an equivalent for the Hebrew term *keneset* or *kenessiyah* (assembly). The Christian understanding of *ecclesia* is based on the biblical understanding of *qahal* as the formal "gathering" of the people of God. The Christian *ordo* (order of worship) is an exact rendering of the earliest rabbinic idea of prayer, called a *seder,* that is, an "order" of service. Moreover, the Christian *ordo* takes its form and structure from the Jewish *seder:* the Liturgy of the Word, with its alternating biblical readings, doxologies, and blessings; and the liturgical form of the Eucharist, rooted in Jewish meal liturgy, with its blessings over bread and wine. Theologically, the Christian concept of *anamnesis* coincides with the Jewish understanding of *zikkaron* (memorial reenactment). Applied to the Passover celebration, the *zikkaron* refers to the fact that God's saving deed is not only recalled but also relived through the ritual meal. The synoptic gospels present Jesus as instituting the Eucharist during a Passover *seder* celebrated with his followers, giving to it a new and distinctly Christian "memory."

4. In addition to the liturgical seasons and the Eucharist, numerous details on prayer forms and ritual exemplify the Church's continuing relationship with the Jewish people throughout the ages. The liturgy of the hours and the formulas of many of the Church's most memorable prayers, such as the "Our Father," continue to resonate with rabbinic Judaism and contemporary synagogue prayers.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CONTEMPORARY PROCLAMATION

5. The strongly Jewish character of Jesus' teaching and that of the primitive Church was culturally adapted by the growing Gentile majority and later blurred by controversies alienating Christianity from emerging rabbinic Judaism at the end of the first century. "By the third century, however, a de-Judaizing process had set in which tended to undervalue the Jewish origins of the Church, a tendency that has surfaced from time to time in devious ways throughout Christian history" (*Statement on Catholic-Jewish Relations,* no. 12).

6. This process has manifested itself in various ways in Christian history. In the second century, Marcion carried it to its absurd extreme, teaching a complete opposition between the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and declaring that different Gods had inspired the two Testaments. Despite the Church's condemnation of Mar-

cion's teachings, some Christians over the centuries continued to dichotomize the Bible into two mutually contradictory parts. They argued, for example, that the New Covenant "abrogated" or "superseded" the Old, and that the Sinai Covenant was discarded by God and replaced with another. The Second Vatican Council, in *Dei Verbum* and *Nostra Aetate,* rejected these theories of the relationship between the Scriptures. In a major address in 1980, Pope John Paul II linked the renewed understanding of the Scripture with the Church's understanding of its relationship with the Jewish people, stating that the dialogue, as "the meeting between the people of God of the Old Covenant, never revoked by God, is at the same time a dialogue within our Church, that is to say, a dialogue between the first and second part of its Bible" (Pope John Paul II, Mainz, November 17, 1980).

7. Another misunderstanding rejected by the Second Vatican Council was the notion of collective guilt, which charged the Jewish people *as a whole* with responsibility for Jesus' death (cf. nos. 21–25 below, on Holy Week). From the theory of collective guilt, it followed for some that Jewish suffering over the ages reflected divine retribution on the Jews for an alleged "deicide." While both rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity saw in the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in A.D. 70 a sense of divine punishment (see Lk 19:42–44), the theory of collective guilt went way beyond Jesus' poignant expression of his love as a Jew for Jerusalem and the destruction it would face at the hands of Imperial Rome. Collective guilt implied that because "the Jews" had rejected Jesus, God had rejected them. With direct reference to Luke 19:44, the Second Vatican Council reminded Catholics that "nevertheless, now as before, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their fathers; he does not repent of the gifts he makes or of the calls he issues," and established as an overriding hermeneutical principle for homilists dealing with such passages that "the Jews should not be represented as rejected by God or accursed, as if this followed from Holy Scripture" (*Nostra Aetate,* no. 4; cf. 1985 *Notes*, VI:33).

8. Reasons for increased sensitivity to the ways in which Jews and Judaism are presented in homilies are multiple. First, understanding of the biblical readings and of the structure of Catholic liturgy will be enhanced by an appreciation of their ancient sources

and their continuing spiritual links with Judaism. The Christian proclamation of the saving deeds of the One God through Jesus was formed in the context of Second Temple Judaism and cannot be understood thoroughly without that context. It is a proclamation that, at its heart, stands in solidarity with the continuing Jewish witness in affirming the One God as Lord of history. Further, false or demeaning portraits of a repudiated Israel may undermine Christianity as well. How can one confidently affirm the truth of God's covenant with all humanity and creation in Christ (see Rom. 8:21) without at the same time affirming God's faithfulness to the Covenant with Israel that also lies at the heart of the biblical testimony?

9. As Catholic homilists know, the liturgical year presents both opportunities and challenges. One can show the parallels between the Jewish and Catholic liturgical cycles. And one can, with clarity, confront misinterpretations of the meaning of the lectionary readings, which have been too familiar in the past. Specifically, homilists can guide people away from a triumphalism that would equate the pilgrim Church with the Reign of God, which is the Church's mission to herald and proclaim. Likewise, homilists can confront the unconscious transmission of anti-Judaism through cliches that derive from an unhistorical overgeneralization of the self-critical aspects of the story of Israel as told in the Scriptures (e.g., "hardheartedness" of the Jews, "blindness," "legalism," "materialism," "rejection of Jesus," etc.). From Advent through Passover/Easter, to Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashana, the Catholic and Jewish liturgical cycles spiral around one another in a stately progression of challenges to God's people to repent, to remain faithful to God's call, and to prepare the world for the coming of God's Reign. While each is distinct and unique, they are related to one another. Christianity is engrafted on and continues to draw sustenance from the common root, biblical Israel (Rom. 11:13–24).

10. In this respect, the 1985 *Notes,* stressing "the unity of the divine plan" (no. 11), caution against a simplistic framing of the relationship of Christianity and Judaism as "two parallel ways of salvation" (no. 7). The Church proclaims the universal salvific significance of the Christ-event and looks forward to the day when "there shall be one flock and one shepherd" (Jn 10:16; cf. Is 66:2; Zep 3:9; Jer 23:3; Ez 11:17; see also no. 31e below). So intimate is this rela-

tionship that the Church "encounters the mystery of Israel" when "pondering her own mystery" (1974 *Guidelines*, no. 5).

ADVENT: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCRIPTURES

11. The lectionary readings from the prophets are selected to bring out the ancient Christian theme that Jesus is the "fulfillment" of the biblical message of hope and promise, the inauguration of the "days to come" described, for example, by the daily Advent Masses, and on Sundays by Isaiah in cycle A and Jeremiah in cycle C for the First Sunday of Advent. This truth needs to be framed very carefully. Christians believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah who has come (see Lk 4:22), but also know that his messianic kingdom is not fully realized. The ancient messianic prophecies are not merely temporal predictions but profound expressions of eschatological hope. Since this dimension can be misunderstood or even missed altogether, the homilist needs to raise clearly the hope found in the prophets and heightened in the proclamations of Christ. This hope includes trust in what is promised but not yet seen. While the biblical prophecies of an age of universal *shalom* are "fulfilled" (i.e., irreversibly inaugurated) in Christ's coming, the fulfillment is not yet completely worked out in each person's life or perfected in the world at large (1974 *Guidelines*, no. 2). It is the mission of the Church, as also that of the Jewish people, to proclaim and to work to prepare the world for the full flowering of God's reign, which is, but is "not yet" (cf. 1974 *Guidelines*, II). Both the Christian "Our Father" and the Jewish *Kaddish* exemplify this message. Thus, both Christianity and Judaism seal their worship with a common hope: "Thy kingdom come!"

12. Christians proclaim that the Messiah has indeed come and that God's Reign is "at hand." With the Jewish people we await the complete realization of the messianic age.

> In underlining the eschatological dimension of Christianity, we shall reach a greater awareness that the people of God of the Old and the New Testament are tending toward a like end in the future: the coming or return of the Messiah—

even if they start from two different points of view (1985 *Notes*, nos. 18–19).

13. Other difficulties may be less theologically momentous but can still be troublesome. For example, the reading from Baruch in cycle C or from Isaiah in cycle A for the Second Sunday of Advent can leave the impression that pre-Jesus Israel was wholly guilt-ridden and in mourning, and Judaism virtually moribund. In fact, in their original historical settings, such passages reveal Judaism's remarkable capacity for self-criticism. While Israel had periods of deep mourning (see Lamentations) and was justly accused of sinfulness (e.g., see Jeremiah), it also experienced periods of joy, return from Exile, and continuing *teshuvah*, turning back to God in faithful repentance. Judaism was and is incredibly complex and vital, with a wide variety of creative spiritual movements vying for the people's adherence.

14. The reform of the liturgy initiated by the Second Vatican Council reintroduced regular readings from the Old Testament into the lectionary. For Catholics, the Old Testament is that collection that contains the Hebrew Scriptures and the seven deuterocanonical books. Using postbiblical Jewish sources, with respect for the essential differences between Christian and Jewish traditions of biblical interpretation, can enliven the approach to the biblical text (cf. nos. 31a and 31i below). The opportunity also presents a challenge for the homilist. Principles of selection of passages vary. Sometimes the readings are cyclic, providing a continuity of narrative over a period of time. At other times, especially during Advent and Lent, a reading from the prophets or one of the historical books of the Old Testament and a gospel pericope are "paired," based on such liturgical traditions as the *sensus plenior* (fuller meaning) or, as is especially the case in Ordinary Time, according to the principle of *typology*, in which biblical figures and events are seen as "types" prefiguring Jesus (see no. 31e below).

15. Many of these pairings represent natural associations of similar events and teachings. Others rely on New Testament precedent and interpretation of the messianic psalms and prophetic passages. Matthew 1:23, for example, quotes the Septuagint, which translates the Hebrew *almah* (young woman) as the Greek for *virgin*

in its rendering of Isaiah 7:14. The same biblical text, therefore, can have more than one valid hermeneutical interpretation, ranging from its original historical context and intent to traditional Christological applications. The 1985 *Notes* describe this phenomenon as flowing from the "unfathomable riches" and "inexhaustible content" of the Hebrew Bible. For Christians, the unity of the Bible depends on understanding all Scripture in the light of Christ. Typology is one form, rooted in the New Testament itself, of expressing this unity of Scripture and of the divine plan (see no. 31e below). As such, it "should not lead us to forget that it [the Hebrew Bible] retains its own value as Revelation that the New Testament often does no more than resume" (1985 *Notes*, no. 15; cf. *Dei Verbum*, 14–18).

LENT: CONTROVERSIES AND CONFLICTS

16. The Lenten lectionary presents just as many challenges. Prophetic texts such as Joel (Ash Wednesday), Jeremiah's "new covenant" (cycle B, Fifth Sunday), and Isaiah (cycle C, Fifth Sunday) call the assembly to proclaim Jesus as the Christ while avoiding negativism toward Judaism.

17. In addition, many of the New Testament texts, such as Matthew's references to "hypocrites in the synagogue" (Ash Wednesday), John's depiction of Jesus in the Temple (cycle B, Third Sunday), and Jesus' conflicts with the Pharisees (e.g., Lk, cycle C, Fourth Sunday) can give the impression that the Judaism of Jesus' day was devoid of spiritual depth and essentially at odds with Jesus' teaching. References to earlier divine punishments of the Jews (e.g., 1 Cor, cycle C, Third Sunday) can further intensify a false image of Jews and Judaism as a people rejected by God.

18. In fact, however, as the 1985 *Notes* are at pains to clarify (sec. III and IV), Jesus was observant of the Torah (e.g., in the details of his circumcision and purification given in Lk 2:21–24), he extolled respect for it (see Mt 5:17–20), and he invited obedience to it (see Mt 8:4). Jesus taught in the synagogues (see Mt 4:23 and 9:35; Lk 4:15–18; Jn 18:20) and in the Temple, which he frequented, as did the disciples even after the Resurrection (see Acts 2:46; 3:1ff). While Jesus showed uniqueness and authority in his interpretation of

God's word in the Torah—in a manner that scandalized some Jews and impressed others—he did not oppose it, nor did he wish to abrogate it.

19. Jesus was perhaps closer to the Pharisees in his religious vision than to any other group of his time. The 1985 *Notes* suggest that this affinity with Pharisaism may be a reason for many of his apparent controversies with them (see no. 27). Jesus shared with the Pharisees a number of distinctive doctrines: the resurrection of the body; forms of piety such as almsgiving, daily prayer, and fasting; the liturgical practice of addressing God as Father; and the priority of the love commandment (see no. 25). Many scholars are of the view that Jesus was not so much arguing against "the Pharisees" as a group, as he was condemning excesses of some Pharisees, excesses of a sort that can be found among some Christians as well. In some cases, Jesus appears to have been participating in internal Pharisaic debates on various points of interpretation of God's law. In the case of divorce (see Mk 10:2–12), an issue that was debated hotly between the Pharisaic schools of Hillel and Shammai, Jesus goes beyond even the more stringent position of the House of Shammai. In other cases, such as the rejection of a literal interpretation of the *lex talionis* ("An eye for an eye. . . ."), Jesus' interpretation of biblical law is similar to that found in some of the prophets and ultimately adopted by rabbinic tradition as can be seen in the *Talmud*.

20. After the Church had distanced itself from Judaism (see no. 5 above), it tended to telescope the long historical process whereby the gospels were set down some generations after Jesus' death. Thus, certain controversies that may actually have taken place between church leaders and rabbis toward the end of the first century were "read back" into the life of Jesus:

> Some [New Testament] references hostile or less than favorable to Jews have their historical context in conflicts between the nascent Church and the Jewish community. Certain controversies reflect Christian-Jewish relations long after the time of Jesus. To establish this is of capital importance if we wish to bring out the meaning of certain gospel texts for the Christians of today. All this should be taken into account

when preparing catechesis and homilies for the weeks of Lent and Holy Week (1985 *Notes*, no. 29; see no. 26 below).

HOLY WEEK: THE PASSION NARRATIVES

21. Because of the tragic history of the "Christ-killer" charge as providing a rallying cry for anti-Semites over the centuries, a strong and careful homiletic stance is necessary to combat its lingering effects today. Homilists and catechists should seek to provide a proper context for the proclamation of the passion narratives. A particularly useful and detailed discussion of the theological and historical principles involved in presentations of the passions can be found in *Criteria for the Evaluation of Dramatizations of the Passion* issued by the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (March 1988).

22. The message of the liturgy in proclaiming the passion narratives in full is to enable the assembly to see vividly the love of Christ for each person, despite their sins, a love that even death could not vanquish. "Christ in his boundless love freely underwent his passion and death because of the sins of all so that all might attain salvation" (*Nostra Aetate*, no. 4). To the extent that Christians over the centuries made Jews the scapegoat for Christ's death, they drew themselves away from the paschal mystery. For it is only by dying to one's sins that we can hope to rise with Christ to new life. This is a central truth of the Catholic faith stated by the *Catechism* of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century and reaffirmed by the 1985 *Notes* (no. 30).

23. It is necessary to remember that the passion narratives do not offer eyewitness accounts or a modern transcript of historical events. Rather, the events have had their meaning focused, as it were, through the four theological "lenses" of the gospels. By comparing what is shared and what distinguishes the various gospel accounts from each other, the homilist can discern the core from the particular optics of each. One can then better see the significant theological differences between the passion narratives. These differences also are part of the inspired Word of God.

24. Certain historical essentials are shared by all four accounts:

a growing hostility against Jesus on the part of some Jewish religious leaders (note that the Synoptic gospels do not mention the Pharisees as being involved in the events leading to Jesus' death, but only the "chief priest, scribes, and elders"); the Last Supper with the disciples; betrayal by Judas; arrest outside the city (an action conducted covertly by the Roman and Temple authorities because of Jesus' popularity among his fellow Jews); interrogation before a high priest (not necessarily a Sanhedrin trial); formal condemnation by Pontius Pilate (cf. the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, which mention *only* Pilate, even though some Jews were involved); crucifixion by Roman soldiers; affixing the title "King of the Jews" on the cross; death; burial; and resurrection. Many other elements, such as the crowds shouting "His blood be on us and on our children" in Matthew, or the generic use of the term "the Jews" in John, are unique to a given author and must be understood within the context of that author's overall theological scheme. Often, these unique elements reflect the perceived needs and emphases of the author's particular community at the end of the first century, *after* the split between Jews and Christians was well underway. The bitterness toward synagogue Judaism seen in John's gospel (e.g., Jn 9:22; 16:2) most likely reflects the bitterness felt by John's own community after its "parting of the ways" with the Jewish community, and the martyrdom of St. Stephen illustrates that verbal disputes could, at times, lead to violence by Jews against fellow Jews who believed in Jesus.

25. Christian reflection on the passion should lead to a deep sense of the need for reconciliation with the Jewish community today. Pope John Paul II has said:

> Considering history in the light of the principles of faith in God, we must also reflect on the catastrophic event of the *Shoah*. . . .
>
> Considering this mystery of the suffering of Israel's children, their witness of hope, of faith, and of humanity under dehumanizing outrages, the Church experiences ever more deeply her common bond with the Jewish people and with their treasure of spiritual riches in the past and in the present" (*Address to Jewish Leadership,* Miami, September 11, 1987).

THE EASTER SEASON

26. The readings of the Easter season, especially those from the book of Acts, which is used extensively throughout this liturgical period, require particular attention from the homilist in light of the enduring bond between Jews and Christians. Some of the readings from Acts (e.g., cycles A and B for the Third and Fourth Sundays of Easter) can leave an impression of collective Jewish responsibility for the crucifixion ("You put to death the author of life. . . ." Acts 3:15). In such cases, the homilist should put before the assembly the teachings of *Nostra Aetate* in this regard (see no. 22 above), as well as the fact noted in Acts 3:17 that what was done by some individual Jews was done "out of ignorance" so that no unwarranted conclusion of collective guilt is drawn by the hearers. The Acts may be dealing with a reflection of the Jewish-Christian relationship as it existed toward the end of the first century (when Acts was composed) rather than with the actual attitudes of the post-Easter Jerusalem Church. Homilists should desire to convey the spirit and enthusiasm of the early Church that marks these Easter season readings. But in doing so, statements about Jewish responsibility have to be kept in context. This is part of the reconciliation between Jews and Christians to which we are all called.

PASTORAL ACTIVITY DURING HOLY WEEK
AND THE EASTER SEASON

27. Pope John Paul II's visit to the Chief Rabbi of Rome on Good Friday, 1987, gives a lead for pastoral activities during Holy Week in local churches. Some dioceses and parishes, for example, have begun traditions such as holding a "Service of Reconciliation" with Jews on Palm Sunday, or inviting Holocaust survivors to address their congregations during Lent.

28. It is becoming familiar in many parishes and Catholic homes to participate in a Passover Seder during Holy Week. This practice can have educational and spiritual value. It is wrong, however, to "baptize" the Seder by ending it with New Testament readings about the Last Supper or, worse, turn it into a prologue to the Eucharist. Such mergings distort both traditions. The following advice should prove useful:

> When Christians celebrate this sacred feast among themselves, the rites of the *haggadah* for the seder should be respected in all their integrity. The seder . . . should be celebrated in a dignified manner and with sensitivity to those to whom the seder truly belongs. The primary reason why Christians may celebrate the festival of Passover should be to acknowledge common roots in the history of salvation. Any sense of "restaging" the Last Supper of the Lord Jesus should be avoided. . . . The rites of the Triduum are the [Church's] annual memorial of the events of Jesus' dying and rising (Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy *Newsletter,* March 1980, p. 12).

Seders arranged at or in cooperation with local synagogues are encouraged.

29. Also encouraged are joint memorial services commemorating the victims of the *Shoah* (Holocaust). These should be prepared for with catechetical and adult education programming to ensure a proper spirit of shared reverence. Addressing the Jewish community of Warsaw, Pope John Paul II stressed the uniqueness and significance of Jewish memory of the *Shoah:* "More than anyone else, it is precisely you who have become this saving warning. I think that in this sense you continue your particular vocation, showing yourselves to be still the heirs of that election to which God is faithful. This is your mission in the contemporary world before . . . all of humanity" (Warsaw, June 14, 1987). On the Sunday closest to *Yom ha Shoah,* Catholics should pray for the victims of the Holocaust and their survivors. The following serve as examples of petitions for the general intercessions at Mass:

- For the victims of the Holocaust, their families, and all our Jewish brothers and sisters, that the violence and hatred they experienced may never again be repeated, we pray to the Lord.
- For the Church, that the Holocaust may be a reminder to us that we can never be indifferent to the sufferings of others, we pray to the Lord.
- For our Jewish brothers and sisters, that their confidence in the

face of long-suffering may spur us on to a greater faith and trust in God, we pray to the Lord.

PREACHING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

30. The challenges that peak in the seasons of Advent, Lent, and Easter are present throughout the year in the juxtaposition of the lectionary readings. There are many occasions when it is difficult to avoid a reference either to Jews or Judaism in a homily based upon a text from the Scriptures. For all Scripture, including the New Testament, deals with Jews and Jewish themes.

31. Throughout the year, the following general principles will be helpful:

a) Consistently affirm the value of the whole Bible. While "among all the Scriptures, even those of the New Testament, the Gospels have a special preeminence" (*Dei Verbum*, 18), the Hebrew Scriptures are the word of God and have validity and dignity in and of themselves (ibid., 15). Keep in view the intentions of the biblical authors (ibid., 19).
b) Place the typology inherent in the lectionary in a proper context, neither overemphasizing nor avoiding it. Show that the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures for their original audience is not limited to nor diminished by New Testament applications (1985 *Notes*, II).
c) Communicate a reverence for the Hebrew Scriptures and avoid approaches that reduce them to a propaedeutic or background for the New Testament. It is God who speaks, communicating himself through divine revelation (*Dei Verbum*, 6).
d) Show the connectedness between the Scriptures. The Hebrew Bible and the Jewish tradition founded on it must not be set against the New Testament in such a way that the former seems to constitute a religion of only retributive justice, fear, and legalism, with no appeal to love of God and neighbor (cf. Dt 6:5; Lv 19:18,32; Hos 11:1–9; Mt 22:34–40).
e) Enliven the eschatological hope, the "not yet" aspect of the *kerygma*. The biblical promises are realized in Christ. But the

Church awaits their perfect fulfillment in Christ's glorious return when all creation is made free (1974 *Guidelines*, II).

f) Emphasize the Jewishness of Jesus and his teachings and highlight the similarities of the teachings of the Pharisees with those of Christ (1985 *Notes*, III and IV).

g) Respect the continuing validity of God's covenant with the Jewish people and their responsive faithfulness, despite centuries of suffering, to the divine call that is theirs (1985 *Notes*, VI).

h) Frame homilies to show that Christians and Jews together are "trustees and witnesses of an ethic marked by the Ten Commandments, in the observance of which humanity finds its truth and freedom" (John Paul II, Rome Synagogue, April 13, 1986).

i) Be free to draw on Jewish sources (rabbinic, medieval, and modern) in expounding the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures and the apostolic writings. The 1974 *Guidelines* observe that "the history of Judaism did not end with the destruction of Jerusalem, but went on to develop a religious tradition . . . rich in religious values." The 1985 *Notes* (no. 14) thus speak of Christians "profiting discerningly from the traditions of Jewish readings" of the sacred texts.

32. The 1985 *Notes* describe what is central to the role of the homilist: "Attentive to the same God who has spoken, hanging on the same word, we have to witness to one same memory and one common hope in him who is master of history. We must also accept our responsibility to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah by working together for social justice, respect for the rights of persons and nations, and for social and international reconciliation. To this we are driven, Jews and Christians, by the command to love our neighbor, by a common hope for the Kingdom of God, and by the great heritage of the prophets" (1985 *Notes*, no. 19; see also Lv 19:18,32).

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The crucial issue in the Church's lively dialogue with Judaism today is the conviction that the Jewish religion is not "extrinsic" but "intrinsic" to Christianity. One clear example of this is that Christian forms of worship developed from the Jewish liturgy—and our liturgies interact spiritually and historically even today! There exists a profound relationship between Christians and Jews not shared with any other religion.

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The Jewish Roots of Christian Liturgy will be an invaluable volume for anyone interested in Jewish-Christian dialogue, especially pastors, parish liturgical commissions, teachers, and adult educators.

Dr. Eugene J. Fisher is the Director of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, D.C. He is also the author of **Faith Without Prejudice.**

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